

A
COLLECTION
OF THE
LETTERS

Wm Sinclair
Jan: 1849

Of the late Reverend

Mr JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

Rector of WESTON-FAVELL, in Northamptonshire, and
Author of the *Meditations on the Tombs, Flower-garden,*
&c.

To which is prefixed,

AN ACCOUNT of his LIFE and DEATH.

By THESE he being dead, yet speaketh. Heb. xi. 4.

Printed in the Year 1762.

OF THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY



Printed in the Year 1659

T O T H E R E A D E R.

THE Reverend Mr James Hervey, being now dead, yet speaketh to us in his valuable writings. Writings, which, for importance of subject, weight of argument, sublimity of thought, justness of sentiment, and elegance of diction, are equalled by few, and excelled by none.

His strain is truly evangelical; his method inviting, entertaining, and edifying; calculated both to profit and to please; and a spirit of meekness, candour and modesty, breathes through, and beautifies the whole.

His favourite topic is the righteousness and atonement of the Redeemer. On this he expatiates with inexpressible satisfaction, and dwells with rapturous delight. By this he "touches the finest movements of the soul, and strikes all the inmost springs of action, with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy," and sweetly constrains to the obedience of love.

He ransacks the mansions of the dead, turns the grave into a pulpit, and makes putrefaction and mortality preach lessons to the living.——He surveys, with Newtonian exactness, the starry expanse, and the countless radiant worlds that roll in the nocturnal sky; from these he investigates the glory and perfections of the creating and sustaining God; and from these he enhances the wonders of redeeming love. He mounts the believer on the summit of creation, as upon a stupendous eminence, to enlarge his prospect, and exalt his conceptions of the majesty and glory of that God, who redeemed his church with his own blood. When imagination itself, with all the assistance of science, is lost in the immensity and awful grandeur of the works of nature; immediately he contracts the universe into a span, and the enormous orbs into fleeting atoms, or the small dust that remains in the balance, when the works of redemption are brought in view.

Thus, he unites the most improved philosopher with the sound believer; and makes reason and nature, subservient to faith

and revelation. Whilst he allows reason its freest inquiry and fullest scope, he gives up with none of the peculiarities of the gospel; but holds forth, with the clearest light, and in various points of view, these truths wherein the offence of the cross consists.

The Public are presented, in this volume, with eighty-one of this excellent author's letters, being a collection of those that were judged to be of most general usefulness. Five Sermons, being all of the author's that ever were published, are added. Together with Considerations on the prevailing custom of visiting on the Sabbath: and, Thoughts on the religious education of daughters.—The Sermons are placed according to the order of time in which they were delivered. The first of them [The ministry of reconciliation] is a posthumous piece; but was transcribed by Mr Hervey himself from his short-hand copy; a few years after, he revised it, with a view of its being published, and from that copy it is now printed.

To the whole is prefixed, the life of the author, (collected from the different accounts), in which the Christian virtues are eminently exemplified. This, we hope, will be very acceptable to the reader.

May these heavenly doctrines, and precious truths, which flowed in such copious, gladdening streams, from his lips and pen, be transmitted pure and unadulterated to the latest posterity; and may that divine Spirit, which gave them their proper energy and influence upon his heart and life, ever accompany them to remotest ages.

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T H E
L I F E
OF THE LATE REVEREND
Mr J A M E S H E R V E Y.

THE reverend Mr James Hervey was born on Friday the 26th of February 1713-14, at Hardingsstone, a country village, one mile from Northampton; his father being then minister of the parish of Collingtree, within two miles of Hardingsstone. His mother taught him to read. When he was seven years of age he was sent as a day scholar to the free grammar-school at Northampton, where he learned Latin and Greek; but his progress was retarded by his schoolmaster, who would not suffer any scholar to learn faster than his own son. At school he shewed a remarkable dexterity at all the innocent games usual among children. At the age of seventeen he was entered of Lincoln College, Oxford, under Mr Hutchins, now Rector of that College. The first two or three years he gave little application to his studies; but in 1733, contracting an acquaintance with some persons, who began to be distinguished by their serious impressions of religion, he became more attached both to piety and learning. He made himself master of *Keil's Anatomy*, *Derham's Physico-Theology* and *Astronomy*, and *Spéctacle de la Nature*; which last he read with peculiar satisfaction; nor was he less delighted by *Spence's Essay on Pope's Odessey*; to which he often acknowledged, that he owed more of his improvement in style and composition, than to any other.

Whilst he was at Lincoln College he had a small exhibition of about L. 20 a-year; and when he was ordained, his father pressed him very much to take some curacy, in or near Oxford, and to hold his exhibition; but this he would

would by no means comply with, thinking it an injustice to detain it, after he was in orders, from another person, who might more want the benefit of that provision. He was determined against being a Pluralist; and notwithstanding his father kept him at Oxford, with a design that he should take his degree of Master of Arts, and constantly urged him to do it, yet he could not be persuaded to yield to such a request, though he was of a sufficient standing; looking upon that step as a qualification intended for his future holding both his father's livings. He took only the degree of Batchelor of Arts at Oxford.

When he left that place in 1736, he went to his father, and was his curate; and afterwards he went to London, where he staid some time. He then was curate at Dummer, where he continued about twelve months; and upon his leaving that curacy, in the year 1738, he was invited to Stoke-Abbey, in Devonshire, the seat of the late Paul Orchard, Esq; who valued him very much for his unaffected piety. When his eldest son, the present Paul Orchard, Esq; to whom the second volume of Mr Hervey's *Meditations* is dedicated, was to be baptized, he insisted that Mr Hervey should be one of his godfathers, that he might have an eye to his Christian education; and this he did in preference to many gentlemen of large estates in that neighbourhood, who would have thought themselves honoured to have stood sponsors for Mr Orchard's son.

In the year 1740, he undertook the curacy of Biddeford, fourteen miles from Stoke-Abbey, where he lived greatly beloved by his people; his congregation was large, though his stipend was small; his friends, therefore, made a collection yearly for him, which raised his income to 60 l. *per ann.* At Biddeford he was curate about two years and a half, and remained so until there was a new rector of that church, (his rector being dead), who dismissed Mr Hervey from his curacy, against the united requests of his parishioners, who offered to maintain him at their own expence. During the time that he lived in the West he planned his *Meditations*, and probably wrote some part of them. He says in his first volume of *Meditations*, that it was in a ride to Kilhampton in Cornwall, that he went into the

the church, where he lays the scene of his *Meditations among the Tombs*.

In August 1743, or thereabouts, he returned from Biddeford to Weston-Favell, and officiated as curate to his father.

The first of his writings which raised the attention of the public, was his *Meditations*, published in February 1745-6. This performance being well received by the public, a second volume, containing *Contemplations on the Night and Starry Heavens*, and *A Winter-piece*, came abroad in December 1747.

In June 1750, his health being much impaired by his great attention to duty, and his friends judging that the change of air might be of benefit to him, they formed a design, which they executed, of conveying him to London, under a pretence of his riding a few miles in a friend's post-chaise, who was going thither. He staid in London from June 1750, until April or May 1752; during which time he was visited with a severe sickness, which had well nigh put a period to his painful life; but he recovered, and, upon his father's death, in May 1752, he returned to Weston, and succeeded him in the family livings of Weston-Favell, worth about 100 l. and of Collingtree, about 5 miles from it, worth about 80 l. a year. For some time he remained determined to have Weston-Favell only, and this he frequently declared to his family and friends, and refused to accept of Collingtree, or to qualify himself for it; insomuch that it was in danger of lapsing to the bishop; but at length, through the earnest and constant intreaties of his family, and of his friends, who, unknown to him, had sent to, and procured from Oxford, the necessary certificates of his being a batchelor of arts, in order to his taking his master's degree at Clarehall, Cambridge, he was, after much importunity, prevailed on to comply with their request; and when he waited upon Dr Thomas, the then bishop of Peterborough, for institution to Collingtree, which was near six months after he had been inducted into Weston, he said to him; "I suppose your Lordship will be surpris'd to see James Hervey come to desire your Lordship to permit him to be a Pluralist; but I assure you, I do it to satisfy the repeat-

“ ed solicitations of my mother and my sister, and not to
“ please myself.”

In November 1752, he printed his *Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the Study and Use of History*; which were not written with a design to be published.

The year following, he published, for the benefit of a poor diseased child, a sermon preached at the Visitation of Dr Brown, Archdeacon of Northampton, under the title of *The Cross of Christ the Christian's Glory*. He had preached before this another sermon at the same church; which he had been solicited to print, but could not then be prevailed upon to do it; but since his death it has been published, under the title of *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, &c.

His *Theron and Aspasio* was published in January 1755. Some passages in this valuable performance gave offence to several who were attached, in general, to the author's own favourite system of Calvinism: the Arminians too objected to that work: and Mr Wesley in particular, with some others, wrote against it. Mr Hervey's own defence of *Theron and Aspasio*, against the objections of Mr Wesley, was transmitted fair for the press from his short-hand copy within a few pages; and would have been published in a volume of the same size with *Theron and Aspasio*, had he lived a few weeks longer. This manuscript is now in the possession of his brother Mr William Hervey wine-merchant in Miles's-Lane, London, and it is much to be wished that he would publish it.

In August 1757, Mr Hervey obliged the public with the substance of three sermons preached by him on the late public fast-days.

His labours, both in his ministerial office and in his study, were pursued by him as long as possible, under the disadvantage of a very weak constitution of body; which, together with the severity of his last illness, he supported without a single expression of peevishness. That illness had long been coming on, but greatly increased in the beginning of October 1758, and grew very formidable in the December following; for on Sunday the 3d of that month, in the evening, after prayer in his family, he seemed to be
arrested

arrested by the messenger of death, so that the united assistance of his sister and servant, with difficulty enabled him to get up stairs into his room. His illness gaining ground every day, he soon became sensible that his end was approaching. He had frequent and violent returns of the cramp, which gave him much acute pain. He had likewise a hec tick cough, which afflicted him so grievously in the night, that he could seldom lie in bed till four * in the morning; and was often obliged to rise at two, especially as opium (how much soever guarded by other medicines) would not agree with him.

On the 15th of that month, he complained of a pain in his side, for which at his own desire he was blooded; though his physician Dr Stonhouse had objected to it; apprehending him too weak to bear any evacuation of that kind. When the surgeon came, he could scarcely perceive any pulsation, and therefore took away no more than four ounces of blood, intimating to his relations and friends, that the case was desperate, and that he had blooded him very unwillingly, and merely to satisfy Mr Hervey's desire, who had some hope that the pain might possibly be relieved by it. His curate the reverend Mr Abraham Maddock, being much with him in the after-noon of that day, Mr Hervey spoke to him in strong and pathetic terms of his assurance of faith, and of the great love of God in Christ. "O! said he, what has Christ, how much has Christ done for me; and how little have I done for so loving a Saviour! If I preached once a week it was at last a burden to me. I have not visited the people of my parish as I ought to have done; and thus have preached as it were from house to house. I have not taken every opportunity of speaking for Christ." These expressions being accompanied with tears, which were too visible not to be observed; and lest his tears should be misinterpreted, as they had been conversing about his long expected end; and of his assurance of happiness; he proceeded thus. "Do not think that I am afraid to die; I assure you I am not. I know what my Saviour

* When Mr Hervey was in tolerable health, he rarely lay in bed after six, even in the winter; and rose still earlier in the summer.

" hath done for me, and I want to be gone. But I
 " wonder and lament to think of the love of Christ in do-
 " ing so much for me, and how little I have done for him."
 And in another conversation, discoursing likewise of his
 approaching dissolution, which he did with the utmost
 calmness and serenity; and of the little which we know of
 God's word, he said,—“ How many precious texts are
 “ there, big with the rich truths of Christ, which we do
 “ not comprehend, which we know nothing of; and of
 “ those which we do know, how few do we remember?
 “ *Bonus textuarius est bonus theologus*, and that is the ar-
 “ mour. The word of God is the sword, these texts are the
 “ weapons, which I must use when that subtle spirit, that
 “ arch-adversary of mankind, comes to tempt and sift me in
 “ my last conflict. Surely I had need be well provided with
 “ these weapons. I had need have my quiver full of them,
 “ to answer Satan with texts out of the word of God when
 “ he assaults me.”

On the 19th, the pains of his body abated, and he grew
 drowsy and lethargic; but in the night following, his im-
 mediate death was apprehended.

The next day (the 20th) he was visited by Dr Ston-
 house, who declared, that in his opinion, Mr Hervey
 could not live above three or four days; and discoursing on
 the unprofitableness of riches to the irreligious, Mr Her-
 vey replied, “ True, Doctor, true, the only valuable trea-
 “ sures are in heaven. What would it avail me now to be
 “ Archbishop of Canterbury? Disease would shew no re-
 “ spect to my mitre. That prelate is not only very great,
 “ but, I am told, he has religion really at heart; yet it is
 “ *godliness*, and not *grandeur*, that will avail him hereaf-
 “ ter. The gospel is offered to me, a poor country par-
 “ son, the same as to his Grace: Christ makes no differ-
 “ ence between us. Oh! why then do ministers thus
 “ neglect the charge of so kind a Saviour; *fawn* upon the
 “ *great*, and hunt after *worldly preferments* with so much
 “ eagerness, to the disgrace of our order? These, these
 “ are the things, Doctor, and not our poverty or obscu-
 “ rity, which render the clergy so justly contemptible to
 “ the worldlings. No wonder the service of our church,
 “ grieved

“grieved I am to say it, is become such a formal lifeless thing, since it is, alas! too generally executed by persons dead to godliness in all their conversation; whose indifference to religion, and worldly-minded behaviour, proclaim the little regard they pay to the doctrines of the Lord who bought them.”

When the Doctor was going away, Mr Hervey with great tenderness observed to him, that as not long ago he had a dangerous fall from his horse, by which he was much bruised; and as he had been very ill, and then looked very pale, he hoped he would think on these narrow escapes, so often fatal to others, as a kind of warning from God to him, and remember them as such; adding, “How careful ought we to be to improve these years which remain, at a time of life when but few can remain for us*!”

The day before his death, Mr Hervey went a few steps across his room, but immediately finding his strength failing him, he sunk rather than fell down; his fall being broken by his sister, who observing his weakness, ran and caught him; but he fainted away, and was in all appearance dead, it being a considerable time before any pulse could be perceived. When he came to himself, and his brother Mr William Hervey, who was come from London to visit him, said, “We were afraid you was gone:” he answered, “I wish I had.” And well might he wish so, for his strength was quite exhausted, his body extremely emaciated, and his bones so sore, that he could not bear any one to touch him, when it was necessary to move him about. Yet under all this calamity he was ever praising God for his mercies, and for enduing him with patience.

On the 25th (Christmas-day) he complained much all day of a great inward conflict which he had, laying his hand upon his breast, and saying, “Oh you do not know how great a conflict I have.” And after he had sat for sometime with his eyes constantly lift up towards heaven, and his hands clasped together in a praying form, he said, “When this great conflict is over, then——” but said

* Mr Hervey and the Doctor were then between forty and fifty.

no more; though it was understood, he meant that then he should go to rest.

Dr Stonhouse came to him about three hours before he expired: Mr Hervey urged strongly and affectionately to the Doctor the importance and care of his everlasting concerns, as here is no abiding place, and intreated him not to be overcharged with the cares of this life; but to attend, amidst the multiplicity of his business, to the "one thing needful."

"Which done, the poorest can no wants endure;

"And which not done, the richest must be poor."

The Doctor seeing the great difficulty and pain with which he spoke, (for he was almost suffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings), and finding by his pulse that the pangs of death were then coming on, desired that he would spare himself. "No," says he, "Doctor, no. You tell me I have but a few moments to live, Oh! let me spend them in adoring our great Redeemer. *Though my flesh and my heart fail me, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*" He then expatiated in the most striking manner upon these words of St Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22. 23. *All things are yours, life and death: for ye are Christ's.* "Here," says he, "is the treasure of a Christian. Death is reckoned amongst this inventory, —and a noble treasure it is. How thankful am I for death, as it is the passage through which I pass to the Lord and giver of eternal life, and as it frees me from all this misery you now see me endure, and which I am willing patiently to endure as long as God thinks fit; for I know he will by and by, in his own good time, dismiss me from the body. These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory. Oh! welcome, welcome death;—thou mayst well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian. —*To live is Christ, but to die is gain.*"

As the Doctor was taking his final leave of him, Mr Hervey expressed great gratitude for his visits, though it had been long out of the power of medicines to cure him. He then paused a little, and with great serenity and sweetness

ness in his countenance, though the pangs of death were then upon him, he raised a little in his chair, repeated those words, "*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy most holy and comfortable word: for mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation.*" Here, "Doctor, is my cordial: what are all the cordials given to support the dying, in comparison of that which arises from the promises of salvation by Christ? This, this supports me." About three o'clock he said, "The great conflict is over.—Now all is done." After which he scarce spoke any other word intelligibly, except now and then, *precious salvation.*

During the last hour he said nothing, but leaned his head against the side of an easy chair, and without a sigh, groan, struggle, or the least emotion in the world, he shut his eyes, and died between four and five in the afternoon, on Christmas-day 1758, in the forty-fifth year of his age.

When his body was conveyed to church, it was carried by his express desire with the poor's pall, and he was buried under the middle of the communion-table in the Chancel of Weston-Favell church, on Friday December 28. in the presence of a numerous congregation, full of regret for the loss of so excellent a pastor. His funeral was indeed a most awful and very affecting sight.—Mr. Maddock his curate, who buried him, was himself in tears,—some were wringing their hands, others sobbing; many were silently weeping, but all were inwardly and sincerely grieved, as their looks sufficiently testified.

It may truly be said of him, that few lives have ever been more heavenly.—Few deaths have ever been more triumphant.—He died in the Lord, and is now at rest; where even the wicked cease from troubling; his name is recorded in the annals of eternity, and the honours conferred on him by Christ will for ever continue blooming and incorruptible in the world of glory.

His character, both in his public and private capacity, was of the most exemplary kind.

As a minister, he performed all the duties of that office with the greatest strictness. In the pulpit he was earnest and fervent, and shewed that he felt the efficacy of what

he preached. Nor did he think it sufficient to preach on Sabbaths only, but set up a weekly lecture every Wednesday evening at Weston-Favell church *. The last two or three years of his life he could scarce do any thing more than preach once on the Sabbath, when people from many miles around flocked to hear him. His Wednesday-evening lecture at seven he discontinued for the last year. He had not been † able for some time to preach at Collingtree, or to visit his parishioners at their own houses, as his custom had been; but he encouraged them to come to him, and to converse freely upon the subjects relating to their eternal interests, and on such occasions he would speak with a force and propriety peculiar to himself.

He always preached without notes, except on some very particular occasions; but his method was judicious, clear, and not encumbered with too many subdivisions. His weakness rendering him for several months before his death incapable of speaking to his congregation as usual, he shortened his discourses, and took a most useful method of inculcating his instructions; for after he had expounded his text, and divided his sermon into two heads, (rarely into more, and never exceeding three), he would speak briefly, and at the conclusion of each head inforce what he had said, by a pertinent text of scripture, desiring his congregation (which was generally very numerous) to turn to their Bibles, and double down that text. "Now," added he, "my dear brethren, if you forget my sermon, you cannot forget God's word in this text, unless you wilfully throw your Bibles aside. Shew these to your children,

* This lecture was held during the winter half-year at seven, as it did not then interfere with the work of the labouring people; and he illuminated the church out of his own pocket, not chusing to put the parish to any additional expence.

† Mr Hervey never had any preferment given him; nor ever solicited for any; but continued a curate till his father's death in May 1752; when he took possession of the two family livings, which (being within five measured miles of each other) Mr Hervey and his curate used to attend alternately, till his ill health confined him entirely to Weston-Favell.

“ or the absent part of your family, when you return home.” Then he gave a striking exhortation, and at the end of it another text for them to double down, so that he had always three texts; in order to their finding of which, he paused in the pulpit two or three minutes.

He endeavoured as much as possible to divest himself in his public discourses of his usual elegance of stile, and to adapt his language to the lowest capacity. In this he followed the example of Luther, who in his table talk says, “ If in my preaching I were to pay a regard to Philip Melancthon, and other learned divines, then I should do little good. I preach in the plainest manner to the illiterate, and that gives content to all.”

His method of catechising children in church, and of speaking to them in private, was very engaging and useful. He would ask not only such questions as were suitable to the words of the Catechism, but also such as would strike at the capital vices of his parishioners, yet without giving personal offence.

Some of his parishioners having lain in bed on the Sabbath-morning longer than he approved,—and others having been busy in foddering their cattle when he was coming to church, and several having frequented the alehouse, he thus catechised one of the children before the congregation:—Repeat me the fourth commandment. Now, little man, do you understand the meaning of this commandment? Yes, Sir.—Then, if you do, you will be able to answer me these questions.—Do those keep holy the Sabbath day, who lie in bed till eight or nine o’clock in the morning, instead of rising to say their prayers and read the Bible? No, Sir.—Do these keep the Sabbath who fodder their cattle, when other people are going to church? No, Sir.—Does God Almighty bless such people as go to alehouses, and do not mind the instructions of their minister? No, Sir.—Do not those who love God read the Bible to their families, particularly on Sabbath-evening, and have prayers every morning and night in their houses? Yes, Sir.

He breakfasted at nine, and about eight he called his family together, and required each of his servants to re-

peat by heart the text which he had explained the preceding evening, and then he would recapitulate his exposition; by which method both his text and commentary were imprinted on their memories: after this he had prayers.

In the afternoon, when he was called down to tea, he used to bring his Hebrew Bible or Greek Testament with him, and would speak either upon one or more verses, as occasion offered. And in the summer-season he would now and then drink tea, when his health would permit him, with some of his most serious parishioners; and then five or six of the neighbours were invited; and Mr Hervey's conversation was remarkably affecting, as he had a happy talent at spiritualizing almost every incident; and was naturally of a most obliging and chearful disposition.

In the exercise of his charity he chose to clothe the poor rather than to give them money; and he would get some judicious person to buy linen, coarse cloath, stockings, shoes, &c. for them at the best hand; alledging, that the poor could not purchase on such good terms what they wanted at the little shops, and with small sums of money. "I am," said he, "God's steward for the poor, and I must husband the little pittance I have to bestow upon them, and make it go as far as possible." But when money would be really serviceable to a family, as to a prudent housekeeper, distressed by sickness or misfortunes, he would give five or more guineas at a time; taking care that it should not be known whence the money came. He was particularly desirous of getting the advice of a physician (or at least of some judicious apothecary) for the sick poor; and was ever ready to procure them the very best medicines. He would frequently petition such physicians of his acquaintance in different parts of the kingdom, as he apprehended to be charitably disposed, to give their advice occasionally, when they rode through a town, to such poor creatures, as the clergyman of the place, or some substantial inhabitant, should recommend, as real objects of compassion. He greatly disapproved of the clergy's attempting to give medicines to their parishioners; as he thought it impossible for them to do it with the requisite judgment. "Let my brethren," he would say, "give them wine, bread,

" or
or

“ or beer, and get good spoon-meats made for them; but
“ medicines are of too important a nature to be given in-
“ discriminately.” He observed, that by his own method
the sick poor had the very best medicines, as the physician saw
them himself, and bought them very cheap; because the
apothecary, knowing they were for charitable uses, charged
the physician no more than prime cost, with some little al-
lowance merely for his trouble in compounding them: and
as the physician knew what diseases were curable, there was
no waste of medicine in fruitless attempts to cure cases,
which, though actually incurable, persons of less judgment
could not pronounce to be so.

He gave away a great number of good books, with suit-
able instructions for their use, and especially Bibles. In the
blank leaf he frequently wrote something striking, or else
stuck in a printed paper, relating to *the promises of God in
and through Jesus Christ.*

His income was but small, and it may be wondered how
he managed it so well, as to have such large sums to spare
for charitable uses. He sold the copy of his *Meditations*,
after it had passed through several editions: which sale of
the copy, and the profits of the former impressions, amount-
ed to about 700 l. all which he gave away in charity. He
made of it a bank for the poor. “ This,” said he, “ I have
“ devoted to God. I will on no account apply it to any
“ worldly uses. I write not for profit or for fame, but to
“ serve the cause of God; and as he has blessed my attempt,
“ I think myself bound to relieve the distresses of my fel-
“ low-creatures with the profit that comes from this quar-
“ ter.” He has likewise left all the future profits of his
works to some of the charitable uses above specified.

In any expence relating to himself, he was extremely fru-
gal, that he might be liberal to others; and it was always
his desire to die just even with the world. “ I will be my own
“ executor,” said he. And, as he died on Christmas-day,
his fund expired almost with his life. What little remained,
he desired might be given in warm cloathing to the poor in
that severe season.

To the instances of his charity we may properly add an
incident which affords a very strong proof, not only of the
benevolence

benevolence of his heart, but of his regard to practical religion, and to the doing of every good work within his power.

A day or two before his death, when he was reduced to such extreme weakness as to be unable to read, and could with difficulty speak, a little account being settled with him by a friend, on the balance of which he received 18 s. looking on the money with great indifference, he expressed himself to this effect; " I would gladly dispose
" of this small sum in such a manner as may do the most
" good; it is the only act which I now am, and probably
" the last that I shall be able to perform. Give your-
" self the trouble of looking amongst these books, and ye
" will find Mr Richard's pamphlet, at the letter end of
" which are, I remember, some *hints* concerning the means
" of promoting religion in ourselves or others, which (even
" with some additions and improvements which you might
" easily make) will not fill more than a sheet of paper;
" and if stuck up or framed, might be particularly useful
" in that form; let then such a number of them be printed
" and given away as this money will admit of." His orders were properly executed, and the evidences of such an angelic temper were equally matter of edification and comfort to his friends, as this charitable legacy (if we may so call it) will be to all who receive and rightly use it.

This incident, it is to be hoped, will be candidly considered by those who draw such inferences from his favourite doctrine, and strong expressions of the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ, as his whole life did in the most exemplary manner confute. No man had ever a greater disregard for money, which he esteemed unworthy of his notice upon any other account, than as it furnished him with the means of doing good. Surely we may here borrow the sentiment and expression of our celebrated poet, and justly conclude, that,

" He felt his ruling passion strong in death."

In learning he was inferior to few. Greek was almost as familiar to him as his native language. He was a great master of the classics; and in the younger part of his life had

had written some verses, which shewed no contemptible genius for poetry. He had a critical knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and delighted in it.

With respect to his private capacity, he was never known to be in a passion. No worldly concerns (though he sometimes met with very trying ones) ever affected him. His humility rendered him invulnerable.—When he was misrepresented and calumniated, he would say, “Our enemies
“are sometimes our best friends, and tell us truths; and
“then we should amend our faults, and be thankful
“for such information: and if what they say be not true,
“and only spoke through malice, then such persons are to
“be considered as diseased in their minds, and that he
“would pray for them. They are to be pitied,” says he,
“and I might as justly be angry with a man that is diseased
“in his body.” In his ordinary transactions with others, he was ever chearful, punctual, just, and candid to persons of every denomination.

Yet notwithstanding these irrefragable proofs, that Mr Hervey’s opinions (even supposing some of them, in their remote consequences, were not altogether defensible) had no pernicious influence on so excellent a mind; it is but justice to add, that he guards against the abuses of the Antinomians, though he has himself been branded with that odious name.—Nay, some of his enemies have not scrupled to assert, “That his tenets were dishonourable to God,
“subversive of all gospel-holiness, and destructive even of
“common morality, and very injurious to society itself, by
“making men melancholy, and regardless of business.”

These were the very words of an abusive and an anonymous letter, sent to him by the post; on which that meek and excellent man observed to an intimate friend, with all his usual mildness, “Indeed this gentleman may be said, I
“think, to write at random.—Surely he has never read
“my works: If I knew where to direct to him, I should
“desire him to turn to what I have advanced pag. 124. in
“the second volume of my *Meditations*, and such a reply,
“I would hope, might convince him of his mistake.”

Whatever vein of Calvinism runs through his writings, yet the weakening the obligations to purity and holiness of
life,

life, was the farthest imaginable from his view. And when persons of judgment have pointed out to him such expressions as were liable to be misunderstood in that respect, he always disavowed any such meaning, affirmed, that the fault was not in the evangelical doctrines, so much insisted on by him; but in the misapprehension, ignorance, or inattention of those who abused them to licentiousness.—He would then add, he was ready to alter or retract any sentiment or expression, which he apprehended to be really objectionable; but that to make things equally clear to every one's apprehension, or to have the same effect upon every one's mind, was an impracticable attempt.

About a week before Mr Hervey was taken ill, Mr Maddock mentioned to him a report that was spread about concerning Mr Sandiman's *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*, to this effect: That he (Mr Hervey) had written a letter to Mrs Cooke, and there had said, that Mr Sandiman was in the right, and had convinced him of his error; or words to that purpose. To which he answered, That he had written a letter to Mrs Cooke, and therein he had acknowledged, that many of Mr Sandiman's remarks were judicious, and that he had corrected some of his expressions and inaccuracies. But that he was very far from having changed his opinion as to the substance and matter of the argument: for therein he thought Mr Sandiman was entirely wrong. Whereupon Mr Maddock desired he would insert an advertisement in the London papers, signed by himself, to set this mistake right, lest it might hinder the sale and reading of his books, and thereby prevent much good. To which he agreed; and added, that he would let that paragraph stand in his *Answer to Mr Wesley*, relating to Mr Sandiman, only softening the expression a little; but all this was prevented by his illness and death.

The passage in Mr Hervey's letter to Mrs Cooke referred to above, is as follows.

“ A book has lately appeared in two volumes, entitled, “ *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*. I cannot say I would recommend it to your perusal; but I would be glad if you “ would mention it in some conversation with your learned and devout visitants, in order to know their opinion: “ for

“ for my own part, I hardly can tell what opinion to
 “ form. The author conceals his name, and it seems dif-
 “ ficult to discover his principles or his aim. Some things
 “ are excellent, written with spirit, and in a strain truly
 “ evangelical. In some things I stand corrected by him;
 “ I kiss the rod, and, far from being displeased, am thank-
 “ ful for his animadversions; though in some instances he
 “ has acted a disingenuous part; not consulting the most
 “ correct edition of my book; not adverting to my own
 “ explanation of my meaning; and making me approve
 “ the whole of a person’s works, where I only commend
 “ some particular part. But what gives me the greatest
 “ disgust, and will, I believe, offend every candid reader,
 “ is a bitter vein of contempt and invective against some
 “ of the best of men that ever lived, and some of the best
 “ authors that ever wrote. I once thought the apostle
 “ James’s question implied an impossibility; but it seems
 “ to be reduced to real fact by the pen of this critic, in the
 “ *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*, where *the fountain sendeth*
 “ *forth at the same place*, in the same performance, *sweet*
 “ *water and bitter.*”

Mr Hervey’s sentiments on this strange piece may be further seen in another letter to a friend, where he says;

“ With them * I intend to put into your hand a treatise
 “ lately published, under the title of *Letters on Theron and*
 “ *Aspasio*; the author is a Scotsman, I presume, because
 “ they are printed at Edinburgh, and he gave orders for a
 “ set to be sent to me from thence. He conceals his name,
 “ and none that I am acquainted with are able to discover
 “ whose work it is. There are some strictures on my per-
 “ formance, but by far the greatest part of the book is ve-
 “ ry wide from this mark. Some things are truly excel-
 “ lent, and some animadversions upon me are perfectly
 “ just; but others (if I mistake not) are unfair and
 “ disingenuous. The manner of writing is by no
 “ means despicable, rather elegant and spirited than coarse
 “ or dull. But there is such an implacable bitterness
 “ of spirit, and such an unchristian virulence of censure a-

* *Viz.* Two or three sermons he was going to publish.

“ gainst many of the best men that ever lived, and best authors
 “ that ever wrote, as much surprises and greatly offends me, I
 “ think I never saw a notion of faith more *lax*, nor an idea of
 “ grace more *exalted*, than in this book. However, I will
 “ not forestal your judgment, but will desire your accept-
 “ ance of the piece, and your remarks upon it.”

These letters are striking proofs of this excellent man's candour and meekness; that though, in justice to himself and others, he modestly declares the *dissingenuity*, *contempt*, and *unchristian virulence* of that author, yet, at the same time, he gladly acknowledges what is right, and meekly owns, that he “ stands corrected by him in some things, kisses the rod, and is thankful for his animadversions.” A temper truly noble and eminently Christian !

“ Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
 “ And gladly praise the merit of a foe.”

Pope.

ON THE
DEATH
OF THE LATE REVEREND
Mr JAMES HERVEY.

URANIA speak! in pensive numbers tell
How Zion trembled when great HERVEY fell!
When fail'd his strength, and when his pulse beat low,
Tell how she mourn'd to see th' impending blow!
O thou to whom all sacred themes belong,
Pour forth the sweetly melancholy song!

Alas! grim death hath shot the fatal dart,
Which long seem'd pointed at his languid heart.
Th' insatiate tyrant, crown'd with fun'ral gloom,
In triumph drags him to the hollow tomb.
Who now so well can paint the blooming flow'r*,
Or preach from sepulchres? At midnight hour,
Who can so well the starry heavens scan,
And read the lectures nature meant for man?
No more his ~~vice~~ a careless world can move,
Or tell the wonders of redeeming love;
No more shall thousands round his pulpit throng
To hear the heavenly precepts of his tongue:
For lo! above this gross impurer air,
Releas'd from every pain, and every care:
He soars aloft (angelic hosts his guide)
On wings new plum'd, which ne'er before he try'd.
With rapid speed his golden pinions rise
Thro' starry plains, and skim th' empyrean skies.

* Alluding to his *Reflections on a flower-garden*, and *Meditations on the tombs*:—To his *Contemplations on the night*, and *on the starry heavens*.

And now, where sparkling portals wide display
 The blissful regions of eternal day,
 The LORD receives him, 'midst celestial choirs,
 Who crown his head, and strike their golden lyres;
 Thro' heav'n's glad courts the greeting anthems roll,
 And joys new blooming feast his ravish'd soul;
 Joys, which to tell all eloquence is faint,
 And which the loftiest muse can never paint.

O N H I S
 P I C T U R E.

By the Rev. Mr NIXON, Rector of Cold Higham in
 Northamptonshire.

WILLIAMS, 'tis yours to bid the canvas wear,
 By art illusive, HERVEY's form and air.
 Oh! with like happy labour could I trace
 Each virtue, each exalted Christian grace,
 Each heav'nly gift with which his soul was blest,
 And fix the bright assemblage in my breast;
 Then how transcendant far would be *my* plan:
You paint his mimic shade:—*I'd live* the man.

HINTS

H I N T S

C O N C E R N I N G

The means of promoting RELIGION in ourselves or others.

I.

BE always chearful as well as serious, that you may win men to Christianity. And in every conversation introduce some religious hints, if it can be done with propriety.

II.

Avoid all controversies; no good can come from disputing; but contend earnestly for the essentials of Christianity.

III.

Heal all divisions amongst sects and parties to the utmost of your power.—And prevail with those who are most fiery to read Henry's excellent treatise on *Meekness*.

IV.

Talk *familiarly* to children about religion, as a delightful employment. Put easy questions to them—encouraging them occasionally by some little presents—and thus teaching them an amiable, chearful, generous piety.

V.

Make it a constant rule to pray for all who affront or injure you.—Christ enjoins us to pray for all who despitefully use us. See Matth. v. 44. Disregard all opprobrious names.—Christ himself (as will every one who strives against the corrupt prejudices and vices of mankind) was abused as a winebibber, and even a blasphemer, &c.

VI.

VI.

Be accustomed to a regular, daily, but moderate course of devout retirement: and recommend intercession for others, both in the family and in private.—As likewise frequent attendance at the sacrament.

VII.

Frequent public worship every * day in the week, if your business permit, and if you live in a place where it is performed.

VIII.

Secret ejaculations too may be used as you are walking, or riding, or in whatever company you may happen to be;—and, on *some particular* hour, remember (as for instance, at morning, noon, afternoon, or evening, when your TOWN-CLOCK strikes, which will be a loud and never-failing memorandum) to set yourself as in the presence of God † for a few minutes.

IX.

* See Dr Best's truly useful *Essay on the daily service of the church of England considered*.

† This method is thus recommended by the late Bp of Durham (Dr Butler) in his charge to the clergy. “ Secret prayer, “ as expressly as it is commanded by our Saviour, and as evidently as it is implied in the notion of piety, will yet I fear “ be grievously forgotten by the generality, till they can be “ brought to fix for themselves certain times of the day for it. “ Secret prayer comprehends not only devotions before men “ begin, and after they have ended the business of the day, but “ such also as may be performed while they are employed in it, “ or even in company.

“ And truly, if besides our more set devotions morning and “ evening, all of us would fix upon certain times of the day, “ so that the return of the hour should remind us, to say short “ prayers, or exercise our thoughts in a way equivalent to “ this, perhaps there are few persons in so high and habitual a “ state of piety, as not to find the benefit of it.—If it took up “ no more than a minute or two, or even less time than that, “ it would serve the end I am proposing:—It would be a re-
“ collection

IX.

Use frequent meditation, than which nothing can be more profitable: nor can any thing so much awaken and dispose us for that, and for all that is good, than a strong faith in providence, and a constant chearfulness * of spirit.

X.

Entertain the highest regard for the word of God, and furnish yourself with a few of the best writers, but particularly with Henry on *Meekness*, and Worthington on *Resignation*.—Study them thoroughly, and endeavour to make their sentiments your own. Meekness and Resignation are the two principal duties of a Christian.—Disperse good books

“ collection THAT WE ARE IN THE DIVINE PRESENCE, and
 “ contribute to our *being in the fear of the Lord all the day*
 “ *long.*

“ A duty of the like kind, and serving to the same purpose,
 “ is the particular acknowledgment of God, when we are par-
 “ taking of his bounty at our meals —The neglect of this is
 “ said to have been scandalous to a proverb in the Heathen †
 “ world; but it is frequently, and without shame, laid aside
 “ at the tables of the highest and the lowest ranks among
 “ us ”

* In order to obtain a proper confidence in providence, and a settled chearfulness of mind, the reader (especially the gloomy and dispirited) would be much assisted by Bp Patrick's *Advice to a friend*, which is a most inestimable little piece.—

It was first wrote (as the preface tells us) to preserve a pious friend in peace and chearfulness; but if the advice be good, the more public it is made, the better. It was contracted into a little room, that it might be as easy to carry in the mind, as in the pocket:—and is a most excellent guide to peace, chearfulness, and whatsoever is graceful, amiable, and desirable in a Christian.—They who are offended at the uncomfortableness of a religious life, never yet knew the true way of religion, into which this author will lead them.—*Her ways* (says Solomon) *are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*—See likewise Henry's *Pleasantness of a religious life.*

† See *Casaubon in Athenæum*, lib. 1. cap. 2. p. 22.

, occasionally,

24 *Hints concerning the means of promoting religion*

occasionally, if your circumstances will permit—and be very careful in the choice of them, and in adapting them to the circumstances of the person to whom they are given.

XI.

Encourage by your influence, and purse too, (if able), societies for promoting the gospel, both at home and in foreign parts; and, in order to be well acquainted with these, read the celebrated Dr Woodward's *Rise and progress of the religious societies in London and Westminster*, published (as I am informed) by the special command of her late Majesty Queen Anne.

XII.

Whenever you reprove, let it be tenderly, privately, and with all due humility.

XIII.

For the reformation of swearing *, lying, flandering, Sabbath-breaking, passionate † or unchaste ‡ persons, you may

* Hints for the reformation of, or conversation with a swearer.

1. None so ignorant as not to know it is a breach of the third commandment. 2. He who lives in the fear of God is so far from being capable of it, that it shocks him to hear others offending this way. 3. We are taught by Christ daily to pray, *Hallowed be thy name*. Angels praise it, and devils tremble at it. 4. Christ enjoins us to swear not at all. See Matth. v. 34. and also Jam. v. 12. 5. Give to a swearer Dr Woodward's *Kind caution to profane swearers*, or the late Bp of London's (Dr Gibson) *Admonition against profane and common swearing*.

† Hints for the reformation of a passionate man.

1. Causeless and immoderate anger proceeds from a proud and haughty temper, and is contrary to gospel-meekness—that meekness and quietness of spirit, which, as St Peter assures us, 1 Pet. iii. 4. *is of great price in the sight of God*. 2. Christ bids us learn of him, who was lowly and meek, Matth. xi. 9. 3. Every passionate tongue is set on fire by hell, see Jam. iii. 6.

may write out (or keep by you some printed) hints on slips of paper, against either of these vices, and place them in the way of such persons, either by putting them into their books, windows, or other places, provided you do not care to give them to the person yourself—or they may be sent by the post † from or to the metropolis.

XIV.

iii. 6. 4. He who says the Lord's prayer with an unforgiving temper, curses himself. 5. No one has offended us so often as we have offended God, therefore our anger should be against our own sins. 6. *Let all bitterness, (says the apostle), and wrath, and anger be put away.—In patience possess ye your souls, Luke xxi. 19.—No passion in heaven, therefore no passion in a heavenly mind.—Give to a passionate man Henry on Meekness.*

‡ Hints for the reformation of an unchaste person.

1. Contrary to the seventh commandment of the great God. 2. A sin which defiles the soul, and brings it under the dominion of the fleshly appetites. No spiritual life in such a one, see Rom. viii. 6. 3. A partaker of other people's sins—making them partakers of yours—thus doubly guilty. 4. All adulterers, fornicators, and unclean persons, are declared to have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, see 1 Cor. vi. 9. 5. You are a servant of sin, and in bondage to the deepest corruption. 6. If you sin in any of these ways, you sin against your own body, and pollute the temple of the Holy Ghost.—Being joined to an harlot, the Holy Spirit dwells not there. 7. We must glorify God both in body and spirit, presenting ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, see Rom. xii. 1. 8. Purity and chastity is required in the gospel—even impure and lustful desires are there condemned, see Matth. v. 28.—Give to an unchaste person Jenks's *Glorious victory of chastity*, or Dr Woodward's *Exhortation to chastity*.

These *hints* may be very much improved, and are extracted (merely as specimens) from Mr Richards's *Hints for religious conversation*; where likewise may be found such hints for conversation on most other vices, as will assist persons of weak memories, who are desirous of conversing religiously with the vicious, or reproving them, either by letter, or personally, as opportunity may offer.

† The following letter was sent by the post to a Deist, and had a very good effect.

D

S I R,

XIV.

Make it a rule to have *at least one* religious sentence in the letters you write to your relations or friends, when it can be *conveniently* introduced; as such a sentence, *properly* interwoven, often strikes a person; and is productive of more real good, perhaps, than a laboured discourse from the pulpit, or formal advice at home.

XV.

Guard people, as much as in you lies, against Enthusiasm, and excessive rigours, either as to abstinence, retirement, or conversation; and advise them to take all the comfort that the situation in which God has placed them, will conveniently admit of; reminding them at the same time, to acknowledge him in all their ways, and to be *discreetly* * zealous for the honour of Christ.—Reposing an entire confidence in the wisdom, power, and goodness of God; and assuring themselves of the extent of his providence (of which we know not either the value or power) to all his creatures, and to all their actions.

XVI.

But above all, write down the reasons which at any time

S I R,

Though you disbelieve Christianity, I cannot suppose that you disbelieve a future state of rewards and punishments: please therefore to take it into serious consideration, whether you think your actions are such, as will, upon your own principles, stand the test at the great day of account.

As it highly becomes us to do what good we can while we live in this world; and as I am truly concerned for you, I take the liberty of giving this friendly hint; and hope you will receive it as a proof, that the writer, though unknown, is

Your very sincere wellwisher,

A. Z.

* A certain zealot being warned against injuring the cause of Christ by his imprudencies, despised the caution, and alledged, "that *PROVENCE* was at best but a *rascally* virtue."

make

make you afraid to die, and then endeavour by faith, by prayer, and by conversation with experienced Christians, to remove the causes ;—and thus be properly preparing for death : and, if your time and capacity will admit, keep a diary : particularly note your sins of omission—and by this method you will see your progress or declension in religion.

The following IMITATION of Mr Hervey's Meditations is very ingenious, and was wrote by a young Lady (in 1750). It was presumed it would be acceptable to the reader, and is therefore here inserted previous to the collection, as it could not properly be printed in it.

See the *Meditations*, Vol. I. p. 77. and 224.

THE shortning days, the fullen clouds, grown dark and ponderous with the gathering rain; the frigid air, which strikes unwelcome on the tender frame, (but shews what Albion's sons could once endure), proclaim the approach of winter.—See! how the trees, as though they felt a shock like human dissolution, now drop their leafy honours.—Some, you may observe, like feeble old age, hang tottering in the air, till a gentle breeze breaks the tender fibre that supports them, and throws them relentless on the ground. They fall unlamented, when they can no longer delight our eyes; and are no sooner dissolved, than forgot: one summer's beauty is all they can pretend to: whilst the lofty fir, though greatly eclipsed by these gay strangers in the bloom of their youth, yet far exceeds them in the duration of her charms. The beauty of the fir are always the same, and perish only with her existence.

A lively emblem this, of the inability and worthlessness of mortal charms.—How mutable is the happiness of those thoughtless women, who place all their felicity in admiration!—Admiration, from whom? Not from the wise and prudent, that were well worth their aim; but from persons light and trifling as themselves: for such alone pay court to polished dust.—Perhaps, they pass the bloom of their youth without one serious thought; and what a fund of impertinence do they then treasure up for the remainder of their days! which, when all these gay fantastic visions fade, when every outward charm is fled, grows quite insupportable.—How can they bear the shock of approaching age? which (like autumn by the trees) disrobes them of every attractive grace.—The perfections we are by the flatter-
tering

tering world allowed, whilst we have beauty, too often, at least the praise of them, vanish with it, and leave nothing but malice and envy to fill up the great void of uncultivated sense:—They drop like the withered leaves, neglected, if not despised; and like the path of a swift arrow through the invisible air, leave no traces of virtue or goodness, whereby they may be remembered.—How much happier they, who, in the midst of their childish, innocent amusements, experience the effects of a true parental care; who are taught to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, while the evil days come not, and the years wherein they shall (truly) say, *I have no pleasure in them*; and are early informed, (before the trifling joys of this world have made too deep an impression on their tender minds), that all is vanity; that religion, wisdom, and virtue, are the only permanent enjoyments in this world, and will be their only consolation when they sink into another; beauty is no farther of advantage to us than as it is an embellishment to sense, and makes virtue appear more amiable; but when it is only a mask to vice or folly; when it persuades the owner to neglect the attainment of all other accomplishments, the blessing then degenerates into a curse, and we quickly despise the idle flatterer: in short, “the praise that is worth ambition is attained by good sense alone, with dignity of mind;” and a woman of true sense will be always ambitious,—not of gaining admiration, but of deserving it.

I must own myself obliged to Mr Hervey's *Meditations*, for this poor imitation of him. The two volumes published under that title cannot, I think, be sufficiently admired: his *Reflections* are so easy and natural, that, upon reading them, you cannot help being surprised, that the objects which furnished him with those beautiful ideas, did not in the same manner affect you upon the like occasions, till you consider the dignity of style in which they are wrote:—you are then immediately convinced that this is only to be attained by a bright understanding, refined by a liberal education.—I cannot, for my own part, conceive any thing (in this world) to be more thoroughly conducive to happiness

happinefs than fuch * a genius, where every object round him raifes his admiration, and excites his thankfulnefs to that Being, whose bleffings *he* only truly enjoys, who *properly* esteems them; there is nothing fuch a one beholds, but what he can apply to the good of himfelf, and of his fellow-creatures.

* There are few books in the Englifh language, which in fo fhort a time have ever paffed through fuch numerous and very large editions (four thoufand at an impreffion) as Mr Hervey's *Meditations*; which not only please, but improve us: and were written with a view of familiarizing to our minds thofe fublime objects, which will be the ftudy and delight of a glorious eternity.

How many have they tranfportingly entertained in their retirements and lonely walks, and how often elevated them to thofe lofty heights, from whence they could look down on all things below (the delights of good mens friendship excepted) with an eafy indifference.

LETTERS

L E T T E R S
OF THE LATE REVEREND
Mr J A M E S H E R V E Y.

L E T T E R L

On seeing the assizes.

Dear Sister,

Oxon. March 11. 1735.

Y Esterday the judge came hither, and to-day the assizes begin: I shall go to hear the assize-sermon presently. This cannot but put us in mind of that great account we must all give before the judgment-seat of Christ. How melancholy a sight is it, to see a poor criminal go up to the bar! All he has is no longer his own; his very life is in the power of the magistrate; and he is in great danger of a speedy death. And if this be so dreadful, how infinitely more dreadful will it be to appear before a more strict and awful tribunal! The good Lord grant, that you and I may not be cast in that tremendous trial! A trial that will be undergone before angels and God; upon the issue of which our eternal life will depend. Was I to wish a wish for the dearest friend in the world; it should not be for gold, or jewels, or apparel; these things are fading, and the fashion of them passeth away: but it should be for a favourable sentence in that last and great day. Will not the archangel shortly sound the trump? Will not all the dead come forth of their graves, and the Ancient of days sit? How valuable then will an humble and holy life be! If you and I be found with the wedding-garment on, we shall doubtless enter into the joy of our Lord, never to die, never to grieve, never to be parted more. But if we should either of us be negligent in this matter; if we should be surprised without oil in our lamps; - Oh!

Oh! the fearfulness and trembling that will come upon us! the horrible dread that will overwhelm us! to think that we must be for ever shut out of heaven, banished eternally from the presence of God, the society of saints, and the fulness of joy! If you or I were to be torn from our kindred and our father's house, and hurried away captive into a foreign country; there to be chained to the galleys, or condemned to the mines: how would this grieve both us and our dear relations! how would it pierce our souls as a sword! If this be sad, (as certainly it is), alas! what will it be, to be everlastingly separated by the unpassable gulf? for one to be caught up to heaven, and there to be ever with the Lord; and for the other to be thrust down into torments, and dwell with wailing and gnashing of teeth? Dear Sister, let us consider this; and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure; that when the changes and chances of this mortal life are over, we may meet and live together in glory everlasting. Which is and shall be the hearty prayer of,

Your, &c.

JAMES HERVEY.

L E T T E R II.

On spiritual instruction from natural things.

Good Madam,

Dummer, May 7. 1737.

PRAY be pleased to cast your eye to the bottom; and observe who it is that desires to bespeak you. It is one who knows himself to have been guilty of the most slighting behaviour, and to have deserved in return your greatest disdain. If after you perceive his name to be Hervey—that Hervey who was so lately and so long in London without ever waiting upon Mrs ****; without paying his respects to her who merits so much the esteem of every Christian, without any thankful acknowledgment for her kind wishes so often conceived, and her prevailing prayers so often put up in his behalf.—If, Madam, after you are informed

informed of all this, you can bear to give the remainder of the paper a favourable reading, I shall not only account myself highly obliged to your good nature, but when I have an occasion to put up an affront, and to exercise forgiveness, I will think upon it as a pattern.

On Sunday I was called out by Providence from my own flock, to preach at two strange churches. They lay at a considerable distance from each other, and from Dummer; so that in passing to them, and repairing again to my own parish, I travelled a good many miles. All the way I went along I was entertained in the finest manner imaginable; far more finely than mine, or, I may venture to say, than any words can describe. I wish I had the glowing colours, the accurate pencil, and the masterly genius of some first-rate painter, that I might draw out, with as little injustice as possible, the lovely landscape, and make a present, in some degree, worthy your acceptance. The air was in its best temperament; neither so hot as to enfeeble or dispirit, nor so cold as to cause any uneasy chilliness. It was fit to recommend and set off the most agreeable objects, and to be the vehicle of perfumes, not much inferior to myrrh, aloes, and cassia. I was in company with a gentleman of a clear understanding, and a tolerable share of reading; he had seen much of the world, and had a very deep piercing insight into things; he could talk judiciously upon most topics, and would sometimes bestow some hints upon religious ones. So that when I was disposed for conversation, I could have immediate recourse to one that would refine my taste, and improve my judgment, if not minister grace to my heart. The face of the skies also conspired to render every prospect completely pleasant, it was decked and diversified with silver-like clouds; not such as were charged with heavy rains, but such as prevented the annoyance of one continued glare, and changed the sunshine frequently for a welcome shade; such as served for a foil to the unsullied ethereal blue. Thus did God order all circumstances so as to render our ride exceedingly delightful. At our first setting out, we went over strong ground; where no seed was sown, and so no fruit could grow. Its uselessness was not

...ed himself. ...owing

owing to any defect in point of fertility, but to a want of being manured.

Is not this the case of many immortal souls, who are born with blessed dispositions, and bid fair for becoming eminent saints, but are lost and spoiled for want of care and instruction? O for faithful shepherds to seek them, for industrious husbandmen to cultivate them! send, Lord a plenty of such to work in thy vineyard and to watch over thy sheep! This coarse beginning, though it had no form nor comeliness in itself, yet tended to give an additional verdure to the succeeding scenes. So the bottomless pit and the unquenchable fire, though infinitely formidable, will create in the elect a more tasteful relish and enjoyment of their heavenly felicity. We made more haste than ordinary to get away from this barren spot. For why should any one tarry in such a place, or frequent such acquaintance, where all that occurs is vain and unprofitable? where nothing truly beneficial can either be imparted or acquired? The sooner we are delivered from such a situation, the better; no departure can be abrupt, no flight precipitate. When we were advanced a little farther, we entered upon a large enclosure. Here were all the footsteps of a commendable and successful industry. The wheat was in the blade, and sprang up with a plenteous increase, and in goodly array. It was not choaked with weeds, nor embarrassed with thistles, but like a clean and even mantle covered the plain: a present credit, and likely to be a future comfort to its owner. This suggested to me the value of a diligent hand, that portion which it is in every one's power to bequeath to himself. All the affairs of the slothful are like the mountains of Gilboa, on which there was no dew, neither rain, nor fields of offerings. But where there is prudence and discretion to contrive, and a steady fervour to execute, there whatsoever is undertaken will, in all probability, prosper. By a spirit of management, even the wilderness may be brought to bud and blossom as a rose: and was there such a spirit in the professors of religion, it would prompt them to be, like Dorcas, full of good works; or, like the great apostle, continually aspiring after fresh and higher measures of perfection. We should be frugal
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of our time, careful of all our talents, and most laudably covetous of every grain of improvement in piety. We held on our course, admiring still as we went, the teeming earth, the infant corn, and the pregnant promises of a prodigious harvest. This led me to muse upon one of the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, I mean the general resurrection. It convinced me how perfectly possible it is with God to raise the dead; it gave me also a glimpse of that perfection of beauty, to which the bodies of the just shall rise. For a little while ago I beheld, and lo! the whole vegetable world was naked and bare, without any ornaments, or so much as one amiable feature, like some withered, wrinkled, deformed hagg. But now how charmingly it appears, and smiles, and shines! No virgin is more gay and blooming, no bride is better arrayed or more sparkling. And if God so enlivens and cloaths the grass of the earth and the tenants of the field, how much more shall he quicken and ennoble our mortal bodies, which we hope are the temples of the Holy Ghost? Several of our dear friends we have accompanied to the grave: we saw with weeping eyes their poor bones deposited in the dust. But henceforth let us dry up our sorrows, they are not to perish, but to be purified in those gloomy chambers. The hour is coming when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. Then shall they hear the almighty summons, and spring from their confinement like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices*. Then will they look forth from their dark abodes as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun†: never more to return to corruption, but to flourish in immortal vigour and youth. This is a pleasing meditation, and deserves to be indulged, but at this time it must give place to others. Our next remove was to a lane, set on either side with lofty trees and humble shrubs. Here the prospect was contracted, and we had nothing left to contemplate but our branching and leafy mound. The little boughs clad with a chearing green were refreshing to the eyes; and it was curious to observe,

* Cant. viii. 14.

† Cant. vi. 10.

how every different plant was decked with a different livery. Here the twigs were gemmed with buds just ready to open and unfold; there they were already opened into blossoms, and garnished the pointed thorns; so that they were very delicate to look upon, though dangerous to touch. Oh! the adorable efficacy of the divine voice! how powerfully and how lastingly it operates! God said once, Let the earth bring forth; he spake not twice, and yet how punctually does nature obey this single command! several thousand years are gone about, nor is its force evacuated, impaired, or at all diminished. It endureth in full authority to this day, and is still a most binding law to all the material world. O that men would lay this to heart, and learn a lesson of obedience from the inanimate creation! All other things continue according to their Maker's ordinance, and shall man be the only rebel in the kingdom of nature? shall man alone make the word of omnipotence to be of none effect? While our sight was regaled in this manner, a set of chiming bells saluted our ears with a solemn and serene harmony. It had no great diversity of stops, nor artful mixture of notes, but sure it was most gladdening music, and spoke a heavenly meaning. It was calculated to inspire such a joy as the royal Psalmist felt, when he heard the acceptable invitation of going up to the house of the Lord. On a sudden, when we were least apprehensive of it, the wind wheeled about, and bore away the silver sounds. But it was only to bring them back again as unexpectedly, with the fresh pleasure of a grateful surprise. Here I thought of the sweet influences of grace, and wished for that happy time, when the visits of the blessed Spirit will be uninterrupted. Quickly the lawns and plains disappeared again, and we dived into a wood. Numbers of sprightly birds, hopping and singing among the branches, solaced us as we passed. We thanked the pretty songsters, and bid them go on to supply our lack of praise. But what most of all affected us, being altogether new, was the warbling of the nightingale. What a tuneful throat has that charming creature, and what an unwearied use does she make of it! I myself heard her melody in the day-time, and I am told in the night-season also she takes no rest.

rest. How sovereign and undeserved is the goodness of the Lord to the children of men! The pipe of this wakeful chorister, though now so incessant in thanksgivings, must soon be sealed up in endless silence: while the mouth of dull and ungrateful mortals will be filled with everlasting anthems. The air was impregnated with sweets, and without money or without price we breathed in such a delicious fragrance, as far excelled the powders of the merchant*. This put me in mind of some beautiful lines of the great Milton's:

*Now gentle gales
Fanning their odoriferous wings, disperse
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils.*

The other recalled to my memory part of a divine description, vastly superior to Milton's. *Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over, and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land* †.

Two of our senses being so exquisitely gratified, we were in no haste to leave the place, though it was narrow, and afforded no other prospect but the shining canopy over our heads. But as soon as we were emerged from this Sylvan path, what wonders presented themselves to our view: I think I was scarce ever more agreeably startled in my life. We stood upon the brow of a hill, and underneath were tracks of level ground of an immense circumference. The labouring eye could hardly descry the utmost bounds. The whole scene, being parcelled out among a variety of tillers, and producing variety of fruits, was like a noble piece of checquer-work. The nearer parts, and those distinctly discernable, were replenished with rural riches. The folds were full of sheep, and of lambs frisking by the side of their fleecy dams. The valleys stood so thick with corn, that they even laughed and sung. One spot was not sprinkled, but seemed to be overlaid with a profusion of flowers, as the roof of the temple was with gold;

* Cant. iii. 6. † Cant. ii. 11. 12.

another was, as it were, enamelled, like an embroidered carpet, with a well-proportioned distribution; some of them yellow as oranges, some white as snow, some tinged with a border as red as blood. The towns and villages interspersed here and there looked like the tiny tents of the fabled fairies. Numberless other beauties glanced upon my sight; but as I had not then leisure to examine them, so neither have I now room to relate them. O that these, and all the charms of the delightful season, may lead up every spectator's thoughts to the inimitable glories of heaven. And while the eye feasts upon them, let every tongue acknowledge to the honour of the all-creating God;

*These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wond'rous fair: thyself how wond'rous then!*

I am, &c.

L E T T E R III.

The character of a gospel-minister.

My dear friends, the inhabitants of Collingtree, near Northampton,

Dummer, June 29, 1737.

I Received the letter wrote in your name, and signed with your hands, and was very well pleased with its contents. I am glad that you are all in good health, and am obliged to you for retaining so honourable a remembrance of an unworthy youth. Your desire to have a careful clergyman settle among you is perfectly right and laudable. But I fear you make an over-favourable and mistaken judgment, when you imagine me to be such an one, and pitch upon me for that purpose. However, letting this pass: it is, I say, well and wisely done of you, to be solicitous in this matter. For a minister is a person of the greatest importance imaginable: his office is of the most universal concernment; and his demeanour therein, of the most beneficial or prejudicial

prejudicial tendency. Beneficial, if he be able, faithful, and watches for his souls as one that must give account. Prejudicial, if he be unskilful, unactive, and unconcerned about the spiritual welfare of his people. The things that pertain to salvation, and the means of obtaining everlasting life are lodged in his hands. He is the steward of the mysteries of Christ, and so the guardian (under divine grace) of your best and most abiding interests. If through ignorance he mismanage, or through idleness neglect this weighty trust, it may be the ruin of immortal souls. Whereas, if he be both discreet and diligent in his holy vocation, he may be the instrument of the richest benefits to those committed to his charge. His praying to God, and his preaching to them, may be attended with such a blessing from on high, as will fill them with heavenly wisdom; form them to true holiness; and fit them for the future glory. Benefits these, not inconsiderable or momentary, but such as are great beyond all expression, and lasting to eternity. For these reasons, it will be your wisdom and your happiness to procure a pastor whose life is exemplary; whose doctrine is sound; whose heart is warm with zeal for God; and whose bowels yearn with compassion for men. If your bones were broken, or if you were brought to death's door by the force of some violent disease; you would not be content with the prescription of a quack, but seek out for the best advice. If your wives were in hard labour; if the children were come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth, you would not spare to ride for the most experienced midwife. Oh! be as prudent and careful for the salvation of your souls, which endure for ever, as you are for the life of your bodies which is but as a vapour. Remember, that you are sick of sin, sadly disordered by sundry corruptions, and must necessarily be cured before you go hence, and are no more seen. Remember, that you must be regenerated and born again, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. And be not willing to trust such matters, which are of infinite and everlasting moment, to the management of any that comes next.

Now that you may be the better able to make a right choice in this important particular, I will lay before you
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two or three of the distinguishing characters of a true minister.—*First*, He has a tolerable stock of knowledge. Though not enough to explain all mysteries; or to answer every perplexing question; yet enough to make himself and his hearers wise unto salvation. He may be ignorant of many things without much disparagement to himself, or prejudice to his people; but he must be acquainted with, and able to teach others all that is necessary for them to know.—*Secondly*, He has not only some understanding, but some experience also in the way of godliness. He has learnt to subdue, in some measure, the pride of his nature; and to be humble in his own eyes, and not fond of applause from others. He has broke the impetuosity of his passion; and generally possesses his soul in patience: or if upon some very ungrateful and provoking usage, he cannot calm his temper, yet he can curb his tongue; and though his spirit be ruffled, yet his words will be gentle. He is most commonly meek, after the manner of his blessed Master, and will always return blessing for cursing, according to his holy command. He has often looked into the shortness of time, and the length of eternity; he has weighed the greatness and richness of heaven, with the insignificant and despicable meanness of earth; and discovers such a mighty difference, as helps him to live above the world, even while he is in it. So that he is no lover of filthy lucre, no hunter of carnal pleasures; but his hopes, his desires, and all his views of happiness, are hid with Christ in God. He is courteous and condescending, and will stoop with the utmost cheerfulness to the lowest person in his parish. He will be affable and kind, and seek to please; not himself, but his neighbours, for their good, to edification. But you must not expect to find him trifling or ludicrous; he will not preach to you on the Sunday, and play with you on the week days, but carry the spirit of his sermons into his ordinary conversation. He will maintain an uniform gravity of behaviour, without suffering it to be frozen into moroseness, or thawed into levity. He will love his parishioners, not for their agreeable persons or amiable qualities, but because they are redeemed by the blood of Christ. It will be his business and constant endeavour, I
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had almost said his meat and drink, to set forward their salvation. That by their being made meet for the inheritance of saints in light, his crucified Lord may see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied. He will never forget the importunate request of his Saviour, but those winning and commanding words, *Feed my sheep, feed my lambs*, will be engraven upon the tables of his heart. To fulfil this earnest request, and execute this last charge of his dearest Redeemer, will be the fixed and invariable scope of all his designs. If at any time he hits this desirable mark, by bringing home to the fold any that have gone astray, he will be as glad as one that findeth great spoils. To see the people of his care persisting in profaneness, sensuality, and an unconverted state, will be the greatest grief that he feels: but to see his children walking in the truth, mortifying their evil affections, and growing up in goodness as the calves of the stall, this will be his joy, and crown of rejoicing; better to him than thousands of silver and gold. It is his work to win souls, and by the former of these qualifications he is fitted for it, by the latter he is wholly devoted to it. And in order to prosecute it with the greater success, he will, *first*, Take heed to himself, that his life be a fair and beautiful transcript of his doctrine, such as may remind men of, and be daily reinforcing his instructions. He will not bind the yoke upon your shoulders, till he has wore it himself; and should the paths of religion prove never so thorny, he will go first and beat the way. As far as human infirmities permit, he will strive to be unblameable and unproveable, that he may renew the apostle's challenge, *Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ*. *Secondly*, His preaching will be plain; full of such useful sense as may be edifying to the better learned, and yet delivered in so easy a manner, as may be intelligible to the ignorant. It will not only be plain, but powerful also, if preceding prayers and tears, if words coming warm from the heart, and accompanied with an ardent desire of being attended to; if to feel himself what he speaks, and so long that it may be felt by others, can make it such, he will declare the whole will of God, without withholding or mincing any. Be the truth never so disagreeable, contra-

ry to your profits, or contrary to your pleasures, you will be sure to hear it. He will indeed shew it in as lovely a light, and make it as palatable as he can, but nothing will prevail upon him to conceal or disguise it. *Thirdly*. He will not confine his teaching to God's day or house, but will exercise his care of you every day, and will bring it home to your own houses, whether you invite him or no. He will frequently visit you, and for the same end as he meets you at church. Now, shall you like this part of his duty, or bid him welcome, when he comes on such an errand? Nay, he will think himself bound to proceed farther, and to enquire into the state of your souls, and your proceedings in your families; whether you are competently furnished with saving knowledge? and are careful to increase it daily, by allowing a daily portion of your time for reading the scriptures? What virtues you are deficient in, what vices you are subject to? What evil tempers, what vile affections, what unruly passions, are predominant in you, and want to be suppressed? Whether your children are catechised, and your servants instructed? Whether you are constant in family-worship, and at your closet-devotions? How you spend the Sabbath? whether you squander it away in impertinent visits, idle chat, or foolish jesting; or whether you consecrate it to the better exercises of prayer, praise, holy discourse, reading, and meditation? These, and other points of the like nature, he will examine into, and exhort you to amend what is amiss, no less than encourage you to persevere in that which is good. Nor will he exhort you once or twice only, but again and again, and hardly leave off till he has won your consent. In things that relate to himself, he will be easily said nay; but when the great God insists upon obedience, and a blessed immortality will be lost by disobedience, he will be instant in season and out of season; he will solicit with unwearied applications the important cause, and press you to perform your duty, as the poor widow importuned the unjust judge to avenge her of her adversary; he will add to his exhortations, reproofs. His eye will be open, and his ears attentive to what passes in his parish; and when any one walks disorderly, he will meet him as *Elijah did Ahab*

Ahab *, with a rebuke in his mouth. This I can promise, that he will not rail at, nor accost you with reproachful words; but he will certainly set before you the things that you have done. He will not defame you behind your backs, but whether you be rich or poor, whether you be pleased with it or not, he will bear in mind the commandment of the Lord, and *shew his people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins* †. He will tell you with tenderness, but yet with plainness, that such courses are a sad and too sure a proof, that grace has not had its proper work on your souls, that ye are carnal, and have not the Spirit of Christ. So that a true minister of the gospel will be a constant inspector of your actions, a faithful monitor of your duty, and an impartial reprover of your offences. He will guide you by his counsel, and animate you by his example, and bless you by his prayers. If you be willing and obedient, he will conduct you safely through a troublesome and naughty world, and bring you to the land of everlasting felicity: but if you be perverse and obstinate, he will be a standing terror to your conscience here, and a swift witness against you hereafter; he will be the unhappy means of increasing your present guilt, and aggravating your future account, and of making it *more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you.*

And now, my kind and dear friends, are you, upon second thoughts, desirous of having such a pastor placed amongst you? Shall you be glad to have the aforementioned vigilance and diligence exerted in the holy function? Can you willingly submit to an oversight so narrow, to admonitions so incessant, to corrections so close and particular?—If, after due consideration, ye are willing, give me leave to inform you, how ye may procure such a man of God to come unto you, and take up his abode with you. He is an exceeding great and precious blessing to any people; too precious to be purchased with money, and is the free gift of God. So that the way to obtain him, is to address yourselves to Heaven, and make supplication to the Almighty. What cannot prayer, fervent and believing

* 1 Kings xxi. 20. † Is. lviii. 1.

prayer do? I scarcely know any thing that is above its power, or beyond its reach. Prayer has locked up the clouds, and opened them again, made the earth as iron, and the heavens as brass; prayer has arrested the sun in his race, and made the moon stand still in her march, and reversed the perpetual decree; prayer has fetched down angels from above, and raised up the dead from beneath, and done many wonderful works. In like manner prayer will get for you an useful and worthy teacher; if he be ever so far off, this will bring him near; if he be never so averse, this will over-rule his inclination. Do you doubt of this? I own you would have good reason, if you had nothing but my word to support it. But what if God, who cannot lie, has testified and given you assurance of the same? Why then, I hope, ye will be no longer faithless, but believing. Hear therefore what he himself has said by his own beloved Son, *Ask, and ye shall receive: seek, and ye shall find* *. Again, he saith, *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it* †. Here you see the Almighty has passed his word, and he, to whom all things are possible, has pawned his veracity, that he will not deny you the request of your lips. And dare you not trust the All-powerful? Can you have a better security than his, whose title is *faithful and true*? The divine promises are all immutable, stronger than the strong mountains, and heaven and earth shall pass away, sooner than one jot or tittle of them shall pass unfulfilled. When ye desire a pious and able minister, ye desire a good thing, such as will be for the honour and glory of God to grant. Therefore, encouraged by this, and confiding on his most sure promise, beg of he Most High to give you a true pastor and shepherd for your souls; one that may love you like St Paul, rule you like David, teach you like Samuel, and lead you like Joshua to the heavenly Canaan: that blessed and blissful country, where we all would be!

O God, great and glorious, infinite in thy wisdom, and uncontroulable in thy power! Thy providence is over all thy works; thine eyes run to and fro through the earth,

* Matth. vii. 7.

† John xiv. 14.

to behold the condition, and supply the wants of thy servants. Thou sentest Moses to deliver thy children out of Egypt, Philip to instruct the ignorant eunuch, and Peter to preach to the devout centurion. O blessed Lord, who art the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, vouchsafe the same mercy to us of this parish, that we also may have a teacher come from God. Grant us, O thou giver of every good gift, a faithful shepherd for our souls; who may feed us in a green pasture, and lead us forth beside the waters of comfort. One that may be wholly devoted to thy service, and intent upon nothing but the due discharge of his important office; who may be a light to our paths by his godly directions, and as salt to our corrupting souls by his unblameable conversation. Let such a minister, we beseech thee, be placed over us, as will watch for our spiritual welfare; that will love us with an affectionate and parental tenderness; that will cherish us, as a hen cherisheth her chickens under her wings. One that may be able, as well as willing to instruct us in our duty, to whom thou hast revealed the wondrous things of thy law, and the glorious mysteries of thy gospel. Whose lips may preserve knowledge, whose tongue may be continually dealing it out, and whose mouth may be unto us a well of life. Whose discourses may be milk to the babes, meat to the strong, and medicine to the sick. Who may have a skilful, as well as a compassionate zeal, and know how to divide rightly the word of truth. Who may be an example, as well as an exhorter, a pattern, as well as a preacher, of every charitable action, and every devout temper. Under whose guidance we may walk in the ways of peace and piety, of meekness and humility, of righteousness and salvation; till we all come to the city of the living God, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. O grant us such a priest, and clothe him with such qualifications, and make thy chosen people joyful. Hear us, most merciful Father, for his sake, whose sheep we are, who bought us with his blood; who died for us on earth, and maketh intercession for us in heaven, even Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee, and the Holy

Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end.
Amen.

L E T T E R IV.

On the intercession of Christ.

My dear friend,

I Received your kind letter, and thank you for your affectionate wishes. I endeavour not to be behind hand with my people in this exercise of love. You are always on my heart, and often, often mentioned in my prayers. Especially, that you may be partakers of the Holy Ghost, and feel all those saving convictions, which are described by our Lord, John xvi 8. 9. 10. 11. That you may be interested in the new covenant; and enjoy all those precious privileges, which were purchased for us by our dying Saviour, and are recorded by his apostle, Heb. viii. 10. 11. 12.

Yesterday, in the evening, two gentlemen of the city came to visit me. Our conversation was such, as I would have yours be. Such as was suited (if God vouchsafe his blessing) to edify one another, and minister grace to the hearers. We talked of that infinitely condescending and gracious Friend of sinners, who came from heaven on purpose to be crucified for us, and is returned unto heaven on purpose to intercede for us. The intercession of our blessed Lord was the chief subject of our discourse, and is a most comfortable article of our faith. Because,

His intercession never ceases.—He sitteth at the right hand of his Father, in an abiding posture.—Other high priests are removed by death; but he ever liveth to make intercession for us.—We resign part of our time to sleep, and then lose all attention to our own interests; but he is the keeper of Israel, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth.—We too frequently forget our God, and neglect to carry on communion with him. But Christ has written our names (worthless as they are) upon the palms of his hands; and, a mother may forget her sucking child, sooner than he

he will discontinue his kind concern for the weakest believer.

His intercession always prevails.—If Moses was heard, when he made supplication in behalf of Israel; if Job was not denied, when he petitioned for the pardon of his three friends; if Elijah's prayer entered into the ear of the Lord God of hosts, when he requested for rain upon the parched earth; surely God's dearly beloved Son will not be rejected, when he maketh intercession for the saints.—The Father loves him, infinitely loves him, and therefore hears him.—He has purchased whatever he asks: purchased it by his obedience and death, and therefore cannot but obtain his suit.

Perhaps you will inquire, what it is that Christ prays for?—We are informed of this in John xvii. He prays, that we may be kept from the evil that is in the world, *vers.* 15.—That we may be sanctified through the truth; sanctified through the word of scripture, *vers.* 17.—That we may be united to Christ, and have fellowship with the Father by faith, fellowship with one another by brotherly love, *vers.* 21.—That we may be made perfect in his righteousness; presented without spot through his blood; and, at last, be with him where he is, to behold his glory, and partake of his joy, *vers.* 23. 24.

Should you be desirous of knowing, whether you are in the number of those, for whom Christ intercedes? You may determine this important point, by the following questions.—Do you value above all things, the blessings for which Christ intercedes?—Do you join your own repeated and earnest supplications to his intercession?—And do you rely wholly upon Christ's unspeakable merits, for the acceptance of all your prayers?—If so, be not discouraged; Christ is your advocate with the Father. He died for you on the cross, and pleads his meritorious oblation for you on his throne.

Is not this an inestimable blessing? If Hezekiah desired the prayers of Isaiah; if Darius desired the prayers of the godly Jews, for himself and his sons; how should we rejoice in having the prayers of the exalted Jesus!—If we are tempted, let this be our security, Luke xxii. 31. 32. If
we

we fall into sin, through the infirmity of the flesh, let this be our refuge. 1 John ii. 1. 2. If under apprehensions of death, or eternal judgment, let this be our consolation, Rom. viii. 33. 34.

I do not write out the scriptures, because I would have you look them out, or even write them out with your own hand. And may the blessed Spirit of God write them upon all our hearts!—This will come to you, I hope, on Christmas-even You will talk of this letter, and its contents, to your harvest-men. I should be glad to be with you, and converse, as we used to do, on Christ and the kingdom of heaven. None of my flock, I hope, will be filled with liquor, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.—My kind love to your family, and all your neighbours; particularly to your brother William, whose letter I shall answer by the first opportunity.

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R V.

Advice to new-married persons.

Dear Sister,

Biddeford, Dec. 10. 1740.

THough I am so backward in my compliments, I am most hearty in my wishes, that your spouse and yourself may enjoy abundance of happiness in the married state. I congratulate late, but I shall ever pray, that you may find blessings twisted with the matrimonial bands; and not only live lovingly together, as one flesh, but live holily together as fellow-heirs of the grace of life.

I hope you will both remember the eternal world, which must very shortly receive you. That ere long the nuptial bed must be resigned for a lodging in the grave; and the ornaments of a sparkling bride, be exchanged for the dressings of death. And if, under the frequent view of these serious truths, you study to further each other in faith and holiness—then will you be true help-meets one to the other: then will you come together, not for the worse,
but

but for the better : then may you trust, that when death shall dissolve the union below, Christ Jesus will bid it commence again above ; and continue to endless ages, in the midst of unspeakable delight.

Please to present my humble service to the several Mr ***, and Mrs ***, that still remain in your town, to Mrs ***, and her daughter ; Mr *** and his spouse, and Mr ***. Remember me also in the kindest manner to your poor neighbours, particularly those who have Mr *** books. May God Almighty give them grace to make a proper and practical use of them ! may he sanctify the attentive and diligent reading of them, to their increase in godliness, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !

When you see my Collingtree relations and acquaintance, salute them affectionately in my name. I suppose you will soon see my ***, and ***, present my duty to them. I should rejoice to see them again in the flesh, before any of us go hence, and are no more seen. May the Father of our spirits, and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, our righteousness, prepare us for a happy meeting in the regions of glory, and for the blissful vision of his own adorable Self. .

There is at Biddeford, and has been for a considerable time, a townsman of mine, a middle-aged man, born at —, his name is ***. I little thought to find such a person in these remote parts. It puts me in mind of heaven, where people of every kindred and tongue, of all nations and languages, will form one general and glorious assembly. May you and I, dear sister, one day be numbered with those children of God ; and have our lot, our delightful and everlasting lot, among the saints.

I am, &c.

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L E T.

L E T T E R VI.

On the fulness of Christ.

My dear friend,

I Find you have had Mr *** among you lately; many I hope have found abundant benefit from his preaching, and you in particular. He is a shining light, a choice and illustrious ambassador of Jesus Christ: what a favour of his divine master does he shed abroad whenever he preaches! such a favour, as many corruptions cannot overcome, nor all the world suppress. Biddeford, I hope, has experienced this favour.—Methinks, I now see him in the pulpit, and hear him lifting up his compassionate voice like a trumpet, and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. Methinks, I see him displaying the gospel-standard, and his tongue touched from the heavenly altar, inviting sinners to flock under his shadow; crying, Come, ye simple ones, whom Satan has beguiled, and Christ shall give you light; come, ye wicked ones, whom Satan has enslaved, and the gracious Redeemer shall set you free; come ye that have been righteous in your own eyes, forsake this refuge of lies, and enter into the ark before the rains descend, and the floods come, which will sweep away every false hope: O! lean not upon a broken reed; build not upon the sinking sand; but upon the rock of ages, the foundation laid in Zion by the hand of Heaven itself. Come unto Jesus, ye ruined and undone sinners, for he has a tender heart that is ever open to receive you; and an arm that is omnipotent to save you. Indeed, my friends, those that know Christ's name will seek no other Saviour, nor desire any other good; all their bones will cry out, *Lord, unto whom shall we go but unto thee? thou only hast the words of eternal life.* They that know Christ's free goodness, will put their whole trust in him, and seek no other way to the Father of mercy, but through his merit. This is their only claim they have to make for their acceptance, Christ died; but for whom did he die, my dear friends? He gave himself a ransom for all; he was lifted up upon the accursed tree, and out of his side came

a fountain of blood and water, where every sinner may bathe and be made clean. The awakened sons of Adam, that feel their miseries, see a fulness of merit in one drop of that blood, sufficient to atone for the guilt of ten thousand worlds. This fills them with great comfort, although they are vile sinners; what though they are lothsome beggars, taken from the dunghill of uncleanness, that are but now returning from the highways and hedges of every abominable practice. What though they are as beasts before God; very dogs, like that poor Syrophenician woman; yet Christ's saving kindness is so great and unbounded, that he casteth out none who come unto him. Here is consolation for the trembling sinner, though he has not a grain of worthiness in himself, yet his Lord has infinite treasures of unmerited grace. They who believe that Christ shed his precious blood for guilty sinners, will chearfully put their trust in this atonement for pardon. They will say, O! they will often say with gratitude glowing in their breasts, and tears in their eyes: Be it that my sins are as the deepest crimson dye, and more in number than the hairs of my head; yet the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and washeth a filthy polluted conscience whiter than snow. With him there is not scanty, but plenteous redemption. Be my debts ever so great, ten thousand times ten thousand talents, yet the agonies of the once slaughtered Lamb has paid it to the very uttermost farthing. They who know his righteousness, will put their trust in it alone for justification. If I had the righteousness of a saint, says one, O how happy should I be? If I had the righteousness of an angel, says another, I should fear no evil. But I am bold to say, that the poorest sinner that believes in Christ, has a righteousness infinitely more excellent than either saints or angels. For if the law asks for sinless perfection, it is to be found in my divine surety. If the law requires an obedience that may stand before the burning eye of God, behold it is in Jesus my Mediator. Should the strictest justice arraign me, and the purest holiness make its demands upon me, I remit them both to my dying and obedient *Immanuel*; with him the Father is always well pleased, in him the believer is complete. They who know Christ's power

will put their trust in him for sanctification of heart and newness of life. Though sin is rooted in my soul, and riveted in my constitution, yet Christ can purge it out. Though it were twisted with every nerve of my flesh, yet he can make the rough tempers smooth, and the crooked dispositions straight; the vile affections, like legions of devils, he can root out, and fill every heart with the pure love of God: to which happy state of soul may both you and I be brought while here below; that we may be made meet to ascend to that habitation of God, where nothing unclean can enter.

I am yours sincerely, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

Meditations on the harvest.

Dear Madam,

Bath.

AT Bath I have tarried thus long, but purpose to set forward for my father's-house, if I live till next week; and if I have as good a journey thither, as I had to this place, I shall have cause to be very thankful to that gracious providence which blesses our going out, and our coming in; which protects us from wrong and robbery; from evil accidents and dangers, as with a shield. I hope you, Madam, and Mr ***, are well: and should rejoice to hear of your both being partakers of that which I wish you to enjoy; and none can be said truly to enjoy health, but those who improve it to the purpose; all others waste health; embazzele it; squander it away; all but those who use it as a precious opportunity of making their calling and election sure. We have had most delicate weather for the harvest; a blessing, which I do not doubt has been vouchsafed to you as well as to us; an universal blessing! and such as will prove very extensive. We shall feel the good effects of it all the year round, when winter freezes the air, and turns the earth into iron, or buries it under heaps of snow: we shall be refreshed even then with the productions of the fruitful season. O! that our hearts may be filled with gratitude, as our barns are with plenty.

plenty. The harvest puts me in mind of the end of the world; then our bodies shall arise out of the dust of the earth, having lain a while under the clods, and seen corruption, they will then spring up incorruptible and immortal, an amazing multitude, like the blades of grass, or the ears of corn, innumerable.

The husbandman in harvest receives a reward for all his toil. The labours of the preceding year are amply recompensed by the rich fruits of increase. And the consummation of all things will be the great retribution-day; then the Christian receives the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul; then the riches he has coveted, will be bestowed in the favour of the seeing him who is immortal, invisible; whose loving-kindness is better than life. He will see the desire of his soul, and the fruits of his Saviour's sufferings, and sit down everlastingly satisfied. The husbandman rejoices in harvest, this is his time of festivity and delight. *They joy before thee*, saith the scriptures, *according to the joy in harvest*; they will look up and rejoice, to behold their Redeemer coming in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him; then will they look down and rejoice to see the wicked world burning, in which they were tempted; rejoice to see all their enemies put under their feet; and when the doors of heaven are left open, then shall they enter triumphantly into that city of the living God, and everlasting joy will be upon their heads, and reign with Christ for evermore. Into this exceeding great and eternal bliss, I wish you, Madam, and your husband, an abundant entrance, and remain his and your, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

On supplying a poor Christian.

Dr ———,

YOU need make no excuse for recommending Mr *** in his distressed condition. I am pleased to see you so tenderly concerned for a brother's welfare; and I am glad

glad you have used the freedom of applying to me; seeing divine Providence has put it in my power to help a disciple, a child, a member of Christ. I purposed to have given him ***, and to have lent him three; nor should I have been very rigorous in exacting the debt, provided there was but little ability to repay. But lest the fear of not being able to repay, should create anxiety in an honest heart, and lessen the comfort of a seasonable supply, I make him a present of the whole; heartily wishing, that the same gracious God, who inclined a stranger's heart to bestow it, may also prosper his endeavours to improve it. And if he often calls to remembrance that almighty power and goodness which made a few drops of oil at the bottom of a cruse, and a little handful of meal that was the gleanings of the barrel, a lasting support to the prophet, and to the poor widow, and her son; I doubt not but that he will be enabled to fix his dependance upon the same everlasting Father, for needful success in trading. So that, by God's blessing, I hope, this little stock, frugally managed, may, through his kind providence, put him in a way of procuring necessaries in this wilderness, till he comes to the fulness of the heavenly Canaan.

I think every instance of kindness shewn to us, or exercised by us, should enlarge our apprehensions of the divine benevolence. What is a grain of dust to the whole earth? what is a drop of water to the great ocean? or what are a few days to the countless ages of eternity? Less, unspeakably less, is all created kindness, compared with the boundless goodness of God in Christ Jesus. For by him we have access to the Father, being reconciled by his blood shed on the cross. We are adopted and received into the church, whereof Christ is the head. Being thus in the favour of God, he delighteth in hearing the prayer of faith, which those who believe in Christ daily put up to the throne of grace. O! how great is his loving-kindness and tender mercy. He is exalted, that he may have mercy upon all that call upon him in sincerity and truth. He waiteth to be gracious. He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, for past ingratitude, and great unworthiness. Oh! how great are these blessings which he giveth. Blessings,
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in comparison of which, silver is as clay, and gold as the mire of the streets. He giveth grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them who live a godly life; from them who are accepted in the Beloved, and love him who first loved them. I shall add that charming declaration of the beloved disciple, and earnestly wish, that we may learn by happy experience, and feel in our souls, what it means,—*We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.* Let me beg my dear friends to remember at the throne of grace,

Your affectionate friend, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

On Christ's fulness and suitableness.

Dear ***,

Weston-Favell, 1744.

I Promised *** to send the remainder of her letter, in a few lines to you. Either she may transcribe from you, or you from her, in order to complete the little essay.—I left off, I think, somewhere hereabouts.—*But spiritual interests are infinitely more valuable.* For those, therefore, Christ will provide more abundantly: if they want knowledge, he will not only give them his divine word, but his enlightening Spirit, to lead them into all truth.—If they are poor, he will give them the fine gold of his obedience: he will say to them as the father said in the parable, *Son, all that I have is thine.* Are they wounded? He will give them the healing balm of his precious blood; this will cure the wound which sin has made in the soul; and make the bones which have been broken, to rejoice. Are they naked? He will clothe them with the robe of his own righteousness; they shall appear before the God of gods in the garments of this their elder brother. Are they weak? His strength shall be made perfect in their weakness: he will work in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. When they die, he has provided a flight of angels to attend their departing souls, and conduct them to his own compassionate arms; he has provided mansions of glory,

glory, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, for their future reception. He has provided a fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, for their final portion and inheritance.

Oh! what ample provision is here; this is indeed *good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over*.—What can needy creatures want, which Jesus does not supply? Justly was it once said by an eminent believer, *JEHOVAH-JIREH, The Lord will provide*: let this be the language of our hearts in all our needs.

The hen comforts her winter-brood; she screens them from the inclemencies of the weather. She spreads out her wings, and forms a canopy over them; this affords them a house to lodge in, and a bed to sleep on; no velvet is softer, no blankets are warmer; here they are cherished and refreshed; here they find heat when they shiver with cold, are dried when they come drooping with wet.

Jesus also comforts his poor people; he is called the *Consolation of Israel*: *Come unto me*, says the merciful Redeemer, *all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*; all ye that are weary, and I will refresh you. He is afflicted in all their afflictions, and is as ready to succour them, as a man is to allay the anguish of his own smarting flesh. He is the good, the inconceivably good Shepherd, whose bowels yearn with the tenderest compassion, when his lambs are fatigued or distressed; he even lays them in his bosom.—Every thing but Jesus speaks terror, and creates dismay to his little flock. But this compassionate Shepherd leads them forth besides the waters of comfort. The world lays many a snare for their feet; the world persecutes and hates them. *In the world they must have tribulation*; but Christ says, *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*, and will make you partakers of my victory; because I have conquered, ye shall conquer also. The law lays dreadful things to their charge; the law is the ministration of condemnation; the law thunders out threatenings: they are rebels, says that righteous law; they have transgressed my precepts; they deserve to suffer all the curses denounced against the disobedient and ungodly. But Christ gently whispers, *Be of good courage, my people, take sanctuary*
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in your Mediator, I have answered all the demands of the law: if it requires punishment, I sustained torments unutterable; if it insists on blood, I satisfied it with divine blood; with every drop of my heart's blood; so that, there is no condemnation to them that are interested in me. If it called for righteousness, I submitted to its authority; I performed every jot and tittle of its commands, and thereby brought in a perfect and everlasting righteousness. Lay hold on my obedience; receive this from my free grace, and the law has nothing more to charge against you; for the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them that believe, though the devil tempts and distresses the children of Jesus.—He not only tempts, but accuses them, aggravating and calling aloud for vengeance; cries, Down with them, down with them, even to the dust. But Jesus graciously steps in, baffles the accusation, arrests the judgment, and says, I have died to save *them from going into the pit; for I have found a ransom*: if they have sinned, I have taken them upon myself; if they have multiplied transgressions as the stars of heaven, my Father hath laid on me the iniquities of them all. They are my redeemed ones; they are bought with my blood. I cannot lose my purchase; if they are not saved, I am not glorified.

Such sweet truths sent home upon the poor soul, must be very comfortable and restorative to the drooping sinner; more refreshing and gladdening to the conscience, than the feathers of the hen are to her feeble starving brood.

Upon the whole; let us imitate the chickens, by trusting in Jesus for all we want or wish; let us lean upon our Beloved in all our progress through this wilderness; expect to be furnished entirely out of his fulness; look for protection from his a mighty arm. Depend upon provision from his inexhaustible treasures; and for comfort, from a growing sense of our interest in him.

Let this be the habitual language of our heart.—Blessed Lord, I am weak and wretched, surrounded by a multitude of dangers, and defiled by a thousand corruptions, O defend me by thy eternal power. Let thy almighty arm be ever over me. Let thy holy Spirit be ever with me; never leave me to my enemies; never give me up to my own
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blindness and impotency, for I flee unto thee to hide me: on thee I depend to break every snare of temptation that endangers me from without, to mortify every seed of corruption that pollutes me from within. I am poor, and needy, blessed Jesus, do thou provide for me. Since I must one day give an account of myself to God; let thy blood wash away my guilt, and drown all my transgressions, Since I must ere long, stand before him whose eyes are as a burning fire, O! clothe me with the robes of thy righteousness, the garments of salvation, that I may be holy and blameless in his sight. Since I must quickly die out of this miserable world, provide me an entrance into thine own everlasting kingdom; and while I continue in this world, provide me with grace sufficient for me, that I may live like thine elect, and adorn the gospel of God my Saviour.

I am often distressed; misgiving thoughts and anguish of mind, makes me hang down my head like a bulrush. Through fear of death, and dread of eternal judgment, my joints are sometimes ready to smite one against another; but O! holy, and most merciful Saviour, be thou my support. Pour the oil of gladness into my inner man; give me the joy of thy salvation: the law condemns me, but do thou justify me; my own conscience writes bitter things against me, but do thou whisper to my soul, *Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* The roaring lion often terrifies me; but O! thou good and faithful Shepherd, let thyself comfort me. Let me know, and feel, that I am thine, and then nothing shall pluck me out of thy hands.

This was wrote before my late illness. You see from hence, that you my friends at Biddeford, have been on my thoughts, though they have not of late been addressed by way of letter; and I shall always say, that whether we are sick or in health, the Lord Jesus Christ may be the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever.

I am, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R X.

*Christ the believer's refuge.**Dear —,*

IT is our duty continually to sing Hosanna to the King of Israel, who treadeth all enemies under his feet. He can tread them down like clay in the streets, or cast them out as lightning from heaven. Nothing is impossible to him; they who know Christ's faithfulness and truth, will put their trust in him; they will hang upon him every moment, as the feeble child in the arms of the indulgent mother, for grace to strengthen and enable them to withstand the devices of that enemy of souls, who is seeking every moment to destroy the weak believer, the babes in Christ.—Satan says, with that wicked one in Exodus, I will pursue them with inconceivable malice and rage; I will overtake and tear them in pieces like a lion; I will lay ten thousand snares in their way, and, if it be possible, bring them under the dominion of sin, and after that into the damnation of hell.—The believer replies, Thou wouldst effect this, O thou enemy of all godliness. I know thou wouldst effect it with as much ease, as a feather is borne down by a sweeping whirlwind, was I left a moment to myself; but my strength do I ascribe unto my incarnate God. The blessed Jesus has undertaken for my security; he watches over me every moment, and nothing can pluck me out of his hands. He hath said, who shall disannul it, that *sin shall not have dominion over me*; he will preserve me by his almighty power unto salvation. Let all my adversaries know assuredly, that my safety is not in myself.—But as the hills stand round about Jerusalem, even so standeth the Lord round about his people, from this time forth for evermore.

Whoever attempts the ruin of a soul, that is staid on Jesus, must wrench the sovereignty from the hand of Omnipotence, and cause unshaken faithfulness to fail. So long as all things in heaven and earth, and under the earth, do

bow, and obey the Lamb that was slain; so long as Christ is a God unchangeable and faithful, that cannot lie, so long shall a poor feeble worm that trusts in him, be secure from apostacy and perdition. O! the blessings, the comforts that spring from a right knowledge of Jesus! richer blessings I cannot wish! greater treasures I cannot enjoy nor possess! This, this alone is that knowledge which St Paul valued above all other accomplishments or acquirements, in comparison of which he counted all things else no better than dross or dung. O! let my dear Biddeford friends beg of the Father of lights to send out the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may be filled with the knowledge of him, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; and in return both they and you, my friends, may be assured of the most hearty and repeated prayers of

Your sincere friend, &c.

L E T T E R XI.

On religious conversation.

Dear Sir,

Weston-Favell, Nov. 19. 1745.

I Cannot forbear making my grateful acknowledgments for your most obliging letter. You could not possibly have imagined any thing more agreeable to my inclination, than the proposal you are pleased to make, of admitting me to your acquaintance and conversation. I accept your kind offer, Sir, with thankfulness, with joy; and shall most gladly cultivate a friendship, which is not only perfectly innocent, but remarkably elegant and improving. Especially, since you are pleased to permit the discourse to turn upon those points, which it is my duty to study, and my delight to contemplate. Nor shall I forget, how much I am indebted to your condescension for this favour; but shall always bear a respectful sense of the distinguished rank, and superior abilities of my worthy friend.

Indeed I am particularly delighted with such interviews as serve to enlarge our knowledge, and refine our affections;

tions; such as have an apparent tendency to render us more useful in our present stations, and to ripen us for future happiness; such was that which I lately enjoyed in your company. This is a feast of reason; a feast of truth; and, I must own, has charms for me, infinitely superior to all the impertinent amusements of modish chat, or the mean gratifications of the bottle.

When I have been asked to spend an afternoon with gentlemen of a learned education, and unquestionable ingenuity, I have fancied myself invited to take a turn in some beautiful garden; where I expected to have been treated with a sight of the most delicate flowers, and most amiable forms of nature: when, to my great surprise, I have been shewn nothing but the most worthless thistle, and contemptible weeds. To one who has so often been disappointed, it must be peculiarly pleasing to find the satisfaction which he has long sought in vain. This I make no doubt of obtaining, if I may be permitted to be a third person in the interview, when you and Mr *** sit together in social conference.

I beg leave to return my thanks for your ingenious remark upon a sentence in the essay towards a preface; and also to express my entire satisfaction in your motion for considering more attentively the spiritual interests of the poor patients in the hospital. At present, it is undeniably plain, that much more assiduous and effectual care is taken of their temporal, than of their eternal welfare. With pleasure I shall join in concerting some proper method to rectify this misconduct, and with a real alacrity shall execute (as far as I shall be enabled) any expedient which you shall judge conducive to the recovery and health of their souls.

I almost repent, that my pen has intruded, perhaps, in the midst of important business, and stole so much of your valuable time:—But now I have done:—and shall only repeat, what agreeable views I form from the prospect of your future acquaintance, and what an addition it will be to my happiness to be owned, and regarded,

As, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XII.

Thoughts on some of the thirty-nine articles.

Sir,

Weston-Favell, Dec. 17. 1745.

I Admire your remarkable regard for truth, and that noble greatness of soul, which scorns to sacrifice conscience to interest, and cannot stoop to receive temporal honours on such ignoble terms. Your conduct reminds me of a most amiable peculiarity in the upright and religious man's character, as it is drawn by the inspired writers; with which you cannot but be particularly pleased, as it so exactly corresponds with your own; such a one, says the royal preacher, *feareth an oath*; such a one, adds the sweet singer of Israel, *speaketh the truth from his heart*.

The thirty-nine articles I have more than once subscribed, and as I continue steadfast in the belief of them, as you are pleased to ask my opinion relating to some seemingly exceptionable tenets contained in them, I most readily submit it to your consideration; not, Sir, in the capacity of a casuist, who would attempt a satisfactory answer to your questions; but only under the notion of a sincere friend, who would freely disclose his whole soul, and entertain no one sentiment, but what should be communicated to a valuable acquaintance.

"You are a good deal puzzled about the equality of the Son with the Father in Athanasius's sense."—I own, it is no wonder, that we should be somewhat staggered at this mysterious truth; especially if we indulge a wanton curiosity, and inquire after the *quomodeity* of the doctrine, if nothing will content our busy minds, but a clear comprehension of this particular, they will never be brought to acquiesce in this article. But if they dare venture to believe the express declarations of infinite wisdom, and wait till a future state for a full evolution of the mystery, their assent will soon be determined.

I once thought a very striking proof of this scriptural doctrine

doctrine might be derived from the known properties of a mortal child, considered in comparison with the parent. Is not the son as perfect a partaker of all the constituent parts of the human nature as the father? Are not the children of this age possessed of the same endowments of body and mind, as their fathers in the preceding age? Whatever essential excellencies belong to the one, may with equal truth be predicated of the other. And if the Son, in this our inferior world, be in all points equal to his progenitor, why should we not suppose, that the glorious Son of God is equal in all respects to his almighty Father?

But I choose to forbear all such fond endeavours, to explain what, to our very limited apprehensions, is altogether inexplicable. I rather receive scripture for my teacher, and give up my sentiments to be formed and conducted by that infallible guide. In scripture there are abundance of texts, which, in the most explicit terms imaginable, assert the Son to be God. Now, if he be God, he cannot have any superior: inferiority evidently destroys Divinity: inferiority, in any instance, is inconsistent with the notion of a supreme Being. So that every text in scripture which ascribes a divine nature to the blessed Jesus, seems to speak all that Athanasius maintains, concerning the absolute, universal equality of the Son with the Father.

In what respects can the Son be supposed inferior? Are not the same honours given to the Son, as are paid to the Father? The psalmist mentions two of the incommunicable honours which are due to the supreme Majesty. Both which, he declares, are and shall be addressed to the Son; prayer shall be made ever unto him, and daily shall he be praised. This adorable person is the object of our worship throughout the whole litany. In the doxologies of our liturgy the same glory is ascribed to all the three infinitely exalted persons of the Trinity. I take notice of this, not as a conclusive argument, but only to hint at the uniform judgment of our reformers on this important head, and to point out their particular care to inculcate, with incessant assiduity, this belief upon the members of their communion.—Are not the same works ascribed to the Son, as are ascribed to the Father? God, the sovereign and supreme

preme God, (according to the periphrasis of a Heathen poet, *Cui nihil simile, aut secundum*), often declares his matchless perfections, by referring mankind to his astonishing works of creation. And is not the Son the Creator of the universe? *All things were made by him*, is the testimony of one apostle; and, *He upholdeth all things by the word of his power*, the deposition of another.—Is not the same incommunicable name applied to the Son? JEHOVAH is allowed to be a name never attributed, throughout the whole scripture, to any being, but only to the one living and true God; who only hath immortality, who hath no superior, none like him in heaven or earth. But this title is the character of the incarnate Son. If we compare Moses and St Paul, we shall find that Christ is JEHOVAH, Numb. xxi. 6 with 1 Cor. x. 9. This argument, I think, is not common; and, I must own, has had a great influence in settling my judgment, ever since I was apprised of it.—Another proof was suggested in the morning-lesson for the day, Is. xlv. 23. compared with Phil. ii. 10. It is the Lord in the prophet, that infinitely wise God who manifesteth, even from ancient time, the dark and remote events of futurity; who peremptorily declares, that there is no God besides him, consequently none superior in any degree to him; yet this most sacred person, who in the prophet's text has the attributes of incomparable perfection and unshared supremacy, is, in the apostle's comment, the Redeemer.

I fancy all those texts of scripture, which seems to you, Sir, so diametrically opposite to this doctrine, will, upon a renewed examination, appear referable only to the humanity of our Saviour. If so, they cannot affect the point under debate, nor invalidate the arguments urged in its support.

After all, I believe, here lies the grand difficulty. Sonship, we take for granted, implies inferiority. Sonship implies the receiving of a being from another; and to receive a being, is an instance of inferiority.—But, dear Sir, let us repress every bold inquiry into this awful secret; lest that of the apostle, *αμη εωρακεν εμβατευον*, be the lightest censure we incur. What is right reasoning, when applied to
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the case of created existence, is little less than blasphemy when applied to that divine person, who is from everlasting to everlasting the great *I AM*.—The generation of the Son of God is an unfathomable mystery. A prophet cries out with amaze, *Who can declare his generation?* And if we cannot conceive it, how can we form any conclusions, or determine what consequences follow from it? Here it becomes us, not to examine, but to adore. If we know not how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, how shall we be able to state the nature, or explain the effects of a generation, inexpressibly more remote from our finite apprehensions?

Upon the whole; since the scripture has given us repeated and unquestionable assurances, that Christ is God; since common sense cries aloud against the absurdity of supposing a God who has a superior; shall we reject such positive evidences of revelation, and be deaf to the strongest remonstrances of our reason, merely because we cannot conceive, how the Sonship of the Redeemer can be compatible with an absolute equality, in all possible perfection, to the Father?

It need not be hinted to * * *, That this doctrine of the Divinity, consequently of the equality, of the sacred TRINE, is not merely a speculative point, but has a most close connection with practice; and is admirably fitted to influence our lives, in the most powerful and endearing manner. That it is no less inseparably connected with the grand blessings of acquittance from the guilt, and delivery from the bondage of sin; blessings of unutterable and infinite value, without which the children of men are of all creatures most miserable; which yet we cannot reasonably hope to enjoy, if any of those illustrious persons concerned in accomplishing the great redemption, be supposed less than divine.

The 18th article, you add, is another objection to me, which begins thus, They also are to be had accursed, &c. —This, as you observe, seems harsh. Yet the harshness is not ours, but the apostle's. I imagine, this is no more than a transcript of St Paul's awful and solemn declaration, transmitted to the Galatian converts, and denounced against their corrupting teachers. Be pleased, Sir, to
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peruse attentively that whole inspired letter, and especially to consider, chap. i. vers. 6. 7. 8. 9. Then permit me to appeal to yourself, whether our article professes any doctrine, which is not clearly established in that most excellent epistle; or whether our church uses more severe terms, than the apostle thinks proper to thunder out, in that memorable passage?—But might not this doctrine have been palliated a little, or the tremendous sanction somewhat softened? No; we must not add to, or diminish from, our inviolable rule. A faithful steward of the divine mysteries, must declare the whole will of God, in its full extent and latitude; together with the fearful consequences of presumptuously opposing it, as well as the blessed effects of cordially receiving it.

I am not surprised, that this procedure startles some, offends others. St Paul seems to have foreseen this event; and therefore apologizes for himself, shall I say? rather declares his unalterable resolution of persisting in this practice: *q. d.* I am sensible, that such teachings will be far from palatable to too many of my hearers; I am aware also, that to threaten the divine anathema on every opposer of this doctrine, will be still more offensive. But shall I desist on these considerations? Shall I accommodate the standard-doctrines of Heaven to the depraved taste of the age; or be solicitous to make them square with the favourite schemes of human device, only to avoid creating disgust in some minds? No, verily: I preach what unerring wisdom has revealed, not what capricious man has dreamed, (*απὸ γὰρ ἀνθρώπου κελεύω, ἢ τοῦ Θεοῦ*); and therefore dare not vary one jot or tittle from my high orders. My business is principally to please God by a faithful discharge of my commission, not to ingratiate myself with men, by modelling my doctrine in conformity to their humours; (*ὥς ἡ ἀνθρώποις ἀρεσκέει*); and therefore I must, I must deliver it, just as I received it.

But why do I offer to illustrate these texts? Your own meditations, I persuade myself, will discern, much more clearly than I can represent, that the compilers of our articles are no other than the echo of St Paul; or rather that they only set their seal to the doctrines of Christ, which he taught,

taught, and approve that verdict of Heaven, which he has brought in. This consideration will acquit them from the charge of harshness of expression, or uncharitableness of sentiment.

Your objections thus proceed. I believe that every one will be saved, who acts up to the best of his knowledge.—I almost durst venture to join issue with my friend upon this footing; and undertake to prove, from this very position, the universal necessity of believing in Christ for salvation. Because, I think, it is indisputably certain, that there is no man living who has in all points acted up to his knowledge. And if he has swerved, in any instance, from his known acknowledged duty, how shall he escape punishment without an atonement? *Video, meliora proboque deteriora sequor*, is what the most vigilant and upright of mortals have at some unhappy moments felt to be true. If so, how shall they stand before that righteous God, who will not acquit the guilty, without an interest in the great expiation?—But, I presume, your proposition is to be taken in a more qualified sense; it means, that those who sincerely, though not perfectly, in the main course of their life, and as far as the infirmities of a frail nature admit, act up to their knowledge; that these shall be saved, even without their application to the merits of a Saviour. If this opinion be true, I own, it must be very unsafe to subscribe our articles.

When this point is in dispute, I apprehend, we are to confine it to those who live in a gospel-land, where opportunities of knowing the good-will of God present themselves every day, every hour. As for the Heathens, who lie under unavoidable and irremediable ignorance of the blessed Jesus, they are out of the question. They, I think, should be remitted to God's unsearchable wisdom and goodness. There may be uncovenanted mercies for them, which we know nothing of. It seems to be a daring and unjustifiable rashness, for us to determine one way or the other, with regard to their final state. This, however, is plain from the oracles of revelation, that it will be more tolerable for those poor Gentiles in the day of eternal judgment, than for those inexcusable Infidels, who have heard and disobeyed the glorious gospel.—The controversy then concerns

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those only, who have the Bible in their hands, or the voice of the preacher sounding in their religious assemblies every Sabbath-day. These, dear Sir, I cannot think will inherit salvation, though they act with ever so much sincerity, according to their knowledge, unless they add to their knowledge faith.

Perhaps, what we call their knowledge, is no better than downright and wilful ignorance: the light that is in them is darkness. Perhaps, they never took any pains to get themselves informed in the glorious peculiarities of the gospel. If so, their conduct is one continued disobedience to the divine commands, which require us to seek for wisdom as for hid treasures; which charge us to search the scriptures (*ερευναν*) as narrowly, as industriously, as the sportsman searches every spot of ground, beats every tuft of grass, in order to start the latent game. In this case, what we call their knowledge, is really blindness itself; and their want of true knowledge cannot be their plea, because it is evidently their neglect and their sin.

But suppose these persons have searched the scriptures, and yet are persuaded, that there is no such need of a Saviour's merits. Shall we condemn them in these circumstances?—We do not presume to sit as their judges, or to scatter at our pleasure the thunders of eternal vengeance; we only declare, what sentence is passed upon them by the supreme Dispenser of life and death. He has made it an adjudged case; he has passed it into an irrevocable law, That whoso believeth not in the Son of God, whosoever perversely persists in seeking some other method of salvation, and will not fly to that Redeemer, whom infinite Wisdom has set forth for a propitiation, this man is condemned already.

Will it be said, That a man cannot help assenting to what he is thoroughly persuaded to be right? And if a Deist from his very soul believes, that morality alone is the way to life; and that the notion of a Redeemer, to make satisfaction, and procure justification, is a religious chimaera; shall we blame such a one for following the genuine dictates of his mind?—I answer, still I answer, That we must abide by the determinations of that sovereign God, whose

whose judgment we are sure is according to truth. He has said, nor can all the cavils and sophistry in the world supersede the decree, *He that believeth not, shall be damned.* Be not shocked, Sir, at the seeming severity of the doom. Rather let us be shocked, be greatly astonished, at the prodigious hardness of those more than steely hearts, which can attend to such terrors of the Lord, and not be persuaded to come to Christ; nay, what is enough to make heaven and earth horribly amazed, can bear of these terrors, and yet regard them no more than a puff of empty air.

Nor will it extenuate the crime of unbelief, to alledge in behalf of the Infidel, that he is actually convinced, in his own conscience, that his sentiments are right. He may be so; and yet be inexcusably guilty notwithstanding. For it is not owing to his own fault, that he has imbibed such sentiments? Is it not through his own criminal misconduct, that he has contracted such a perverse habit of thinking? Has he not indulged some darling vice, which has clouded his understanding? Or instead of obeying the great mandate of Heaven, *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him*; has he not attended solely to the arguings, deductions, and discernment of his own reason, as his only guide to heavenly truth? A drunkard verily thinks, (if he thinks at all), that he does nobly in committing insults on quiet harmless people. But will his bare thinking, that he acts gallantly, acquit him at the bar of equity? Perhaps, in his present condition, he cannot help fancying, that his actions are becoming, and that he does well to be turbulent and outrageous; but though he cannot help the effect, might he not have avoided the cause of his phrenzy? Methinks, this comparison will hold good, if applied to the case of many scorers of the gospel; who think contemptuously of Jesus Christ, and who really apprehend they do nothing amiss in depreciating his obedience and death. But I fear, they have brought upon themselves this deplorable delirium or intoxication of their understandings, either by voluptuousness and debauchery, or else by self conceit, and the most odious arrogance of mind; which, in the estimate of the holy One of Israel, is no better than spiritual idolatry.

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For my part, I am assured, that God has vouchsafed us the means of obtaining the knowledge of himself, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; it is equally certain, that he has commanded us to acquaint ourselves with him, and be at peace; it is no less undeniable, that whosoever seeks this inestimable knowledge, by a diligent application to the scriptures, by a child-like dependance on the teachings of the divine Spirit, by humble prayers to be led into all truth, and by doing the will of God, so far as he is acquainted with it.—whosoever seeks, by using these means, shall find; shall come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. If therefore persons are so negligent, as not to use these methods; so audacious, as to condemn them; so haughty, as to imagine they have no need of them; they may justly be given over to their own delusions, and yet be most righteously punished as suicides of their souls.

But still it is pleaded, in vindication of the good-natured, civilized Infidel, that there is no turpitude in his life; that his behaviour is every way irreproachable.—As to the turpitude of his life, when compared with the conversation of other men, I have nothing to say. But surely, there is the highest iniquity in his principles and conduct, when compared with the revealed will of God; which is the only criterion of truth, the only standard of excellence. God has commanded all men to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; but these people protest against the divine edict, and say, with those insolent subjects in the gospel, we will not have this Jesus to reign over us. God has solemnly declared, that all mankind are become guilty before him; that by the works of the moral law, no flesh living shall be justified; that there is no Mediator between God and man, but the man Christ Jesus: but these people maintain, in defiance of this declaration, that they themselves are able to make up matters with their offended Creator, and can, by their own honest behaviour, secure a title to everlasting felicity. God, of his superabundant and inconceivably rich goodness, has given his Son, his only Son to suffer agonies, to shed blood, to lay down an infinitely precious life for them: yet these people like those impious wretches that crucified the Lord of glory, deride
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his agonies, trample upon his blood, and though he has redeemed them, they speak lies against him * —Let us see then a little part of the evidence summed up against the spirit of unbelief. It implies stubbornness, which is as the sin of witchcraft; rebellion, which is as iniquity and idolatry: it implies the most assuming pride, which is an abomination to the Lord: it implies the vilest ingratitude, even amidst the most unbounded beneficence, and the voice of nature has proclaimed *ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris*. —Let the impartial considerer decide, whether the heart of these persons be right before God; or whether their conduct, when brought to the test of that word which is to judge them at the last day, be so unblamable, as is frequently pretended.

Enough has been said of the two first points; I fear, more than enough to fatigue your attention. However, I now draw in the reins, and promise not to put your patience upon doing such tedious pennance any more.

There is another expression in the paragraph relating to the 18th article, which, since you expect my undisguised opinion, I cannot dismiss without a remark. When the scriptures say, that men shall be saved through the name of Christ, you suppose, Sir, they mean, that Christ made a general atonement for original sin.—Whereas, I apprehend, that such texts import abundantly, I had almost said infinitely more. Thus much, I think, at least they must amount to in their signification; that if we are saved from the guilt of our offences, it shall be only through the all-atoning blood of the Lamb of God. If we are made acceptable to that awful Majesty who dwelleth in light inaccessible, this our justification shall be in consideration of the obedience and righteousness of the beloved Son; if we obtain the Spirit of sanctification, are enabled to *deny all ungodliness, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world*, it shall be through the intercession of Jesus our great high priest, by whom alone the Holy Ghost is vouchsafed to unworthy polluted sinners. All this I take to be included in that word, of most rich and comprehensive

* Hof. viii. 13.

meaning, *salvation*; and since it is affirmed, that we are saved by Christ. I should think it must signify, that we obtain all these glorious and invaluable benefits through that all-sufficient Mediator.

As to Christ's making an atonement for original sin, that surely was but one single branch of his important undertaking: woe, woe be to the inhabitants of the earth, if he did no more. Our actual sins, the sins of our heart, the sins of our life, our sins of omission, and sins of commission; and all these sins, which are more in number than the hairs of our head, heavier with horrid aggravations than the sand of the sea, he bore in his own body on the tree. *He was wounded for our offences; he was bruised for our transgressions; and the Lord laid on him (not only the innate depravity, but) the actual iniquities of us all.*

Your next objection lies against the 13th article, namely, works done before the grace of Christ, are not acceptable to God.—Is the meaning of this tenet, you ask, that men are made with a natural incapacity of doing any thing but sinful actions?—I answer, this is not so properly the meaning of the article, as a most cogent reason to establish it. Only let it be stated a little more clearly, and it is no inconsiderable argument in proof of the doctrine. Men were not made by their Creator with this incapacity, but they have brought it upon themselves by their own fault. By their original sin they have contracted a most miserable depravity, and have made themselves *ἡμεῖς καὶ ἅπαντες ἁμαρτωῖοι καὶ ἀδύνατοι*. Since therefore we can do no good work, before we are renewed by the grace of Christ, it seems to follow, that we can do no work acceptable to God, till this renovation take place.—This you observe, does not seem so agreeable to charity, as one could wish.—Worthy, Sir, our notions of charity are not to be the rule of the divine acceptance either of persons or things. If the doctrine be agreeable to the declarations of unerring wisdom, we are to admit it with all readiness, and rather conclude, that we mistake the nature of charity, than that the scripture mistakes the terms of the Almighty's acceptance and favour.—You know, Sir, it is the express voice of scripture, that *without faith, it is impossible to please God*; and till the Spirit of Christ
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be shed abroad in the soul, it possesses no such sacred principle as true faith.—It is a favourite apothegm of our divine Master's, that *a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit*. And are not all that spring from the stock of fallen Adam, corrupt trees, until they are engrafted into the true olive-tree, and partake of his meliorating and generous juices?—I shall only mention one more scriptural oracle; an oracle delivered, not from Delphos, no, nor from mount Sinai, but immediately from heaven itself; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. I have always thought these words are to be taken in an exclusive sense; as though the everlasting Father had said, I am well pleased with the apostate race of Adam, only as they are reconciled through my beloved Son: uninterested in him, no persons are the objects of my complacency, unrecommended by him, no actions are the subject of my approbation. If this be the genuine sense of the passage, it will serve at once to confirm the article, and to obviate the objection derived from the deficiency, and remains of pollution, that cleave even to the performances of a believer.

I am glad you have satisfied yourself with relation to the article, which touches upon predestination and election. These are sublime points, far above the solution of our low capacities. But, for my part, I am no more surprized, that some revealed truths should amaze my understanding, than that the blazing sun should dazzle my eyes. That such things are mentioned in the inspired writings as real facts, is undeniable. I should renounce my very reason, if I did not believe what omniscience attests, even though it should imply what is altogether inexplicable by my scanty conceptions. And why should the incaverned mole, whose dwelling is in darkness, whose sight is but a small remove from blindness, why should such a poor animal wonder, that it cannot dart its eye through unnumbered worlds, or take in at a glance the vast system of the universe?

Your sense of the 20th article is exactly mine. The authority you mention, is, in my opinion, all the authority which the church, the rulers and governors of the church, can reasonably claim, or regularly exercise, in matters relating to faith. These rulers have power, as you justly
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observe, to settle, in conformity with what they conclude to be the meaning of scripture, the nature and extent of their own creed; and none, I think, can fairly deny them a right to determine what points of belief shall be the indispensable terms of enjoying communion with their society. But as for I know not what privilege of interpreting scripture, in such a manner, as that it shall be contumacy to examine, before we credit, or heterodoxy and heresy to controvert their exposition; this is an authority which I cannot allow to any man, or body of men, now in the world. At this rate our faith would be built upon the decisions of the church, not on the determinations of the inspired word; and, consequently, be not of God, but of men.

Could I have imagined, when I set pen to paper, that it would have run such extravagant lengths? Bear with my prolixity, dear Sir, and excuse my freedom; or, rather, if I have said any thing in too free a style, you must charge it upon your own condescension and candour, which have emboldened me to deliver my sentiments without the least cloke or reserve.

But I must not, I dare not, close, without acting as becomes a minister of the gospel; without reminding my valuable friend, that *the inspiration of the Almighty giveth wisdom*; that *a man can receive nothing*, much less an acquaintance with the mysteries of the Redeemer's kingdom, *unless it be given him from above*. To this Fountain of wisdom, and Father of lights, let us make humble, earnest, daily application. Then shall we see the things that belong to our peace, and as it is most emphatically expressed by the sacred penman, *know the truth as it is in Jesus*.

I am, &c.

LET.

L E T T E R XIII.

On the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Dear Sir,

Weston-Favell, Jan. 10. 1745-6.

HOW arduous, and how momentous, is the task you have assigned me! A sense of its difficulty and importance almost deterred me from venturing, so much as to attempt it. A cordial friendship instigated, and a consciousness of my own incapacity checked, for some time, my fluctuating mind. At length the bias inclined to the side of the former; my reluctance, urged by the request of a friend, gives way; and now I am fully determined. —Determined, to what? To enter the lists against the adversaries of the Trinity? More particularly to appear as the champion for the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost? With a view of resting the grand debate on the dexterity of this pen? No; Sir, I form no such romantic schemes; I renounce any such undertaking; I am only determined to lay before you the thoughts which have occurred, since I received your last letter; and this, on the condition of having them returned to the secrecy of my closet, after you have passed your judgment, and bestowed your corrections upon them.

In managing this controversy, shall I say? or rather in pursuing this inquiry, it behoves us humbly to apply to the great Father of lights for direction. *They shall all be taught of God*, says the prophet; this promise we should humbly plead at the throne of grace, and in chearful dependance on its accomplishment, proceed to examine, with a modest and reverential awe, the mysterious points before us. Whoever rejects this key, and yet hopes to be admitted into the treasures of heavenly knowledge, acts altogether as imprudent a part, as if he should expect to attain a masterly skill in mathematics, and at the same time neglect to inform himself of the first principles of that admired science. When a divine person is the object of our consideration, then surely it becomes us, in a more especial

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manner, not to lean to our own understanding, but, like little children, to rely on the teachings of that all-wise Spirit, whose nature, dignity, and attributes, we would devoutly contemplate.—You will, perhaps, take notice, that I anticipate what is to be proved; and take it for granted, that the Holy Ghost is indeed God. I would only observe from this remark, how naturally we wish, how almost unavoidably we conclude, that person to be really God, who is appointed to lead us into all truth.

Let us now, Sir, if you please, address ourselves to the inquiry, whether the Holy Spirit is a real person?—whether that person is very God?—and, these particulars being discussed, it may be proper to examine briefly the most material of Mr Tomkins's objections.—But to whom, to what shall we apply, in order to find the satisfaction we seek? To reason, and her naked unassisted dictates? Hardly can reason guess aright with relation to the things that are before our eyes; much less can she determine, with any certainty, concerning the unsearchable depths of the divine nature, those *τα β. θ. τε ο. ω.* We have in the word of revelation an infallible oracle. To this let us direct our search. To the decision of this unerring standard, let us inviolably adhere; however it may surpass our comprehension, or run counter to our fond prepossessions.

Here we may possibly ask, Is not the Spirit of God, by a common metonymy, put for God himself?—I own I have sometimes been inclined to hesitate on this question. When it is said, *My Spirit shall not always strive with man, and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*; I have never thought these passages a sufficient proof of the personality of the blessed Spirit, though (if I mistake not) commonly urged in support of the doctrine. These, I apprehend, might fairly be interpreted of grieving God himself, and resisting the tender gracious overtures of his mercy. Conformably to that parallel form of speech, where it is said by the inspired writer, *Paul's spirit was grieved*, i. e. without all dispute, Paul himself was inwardly afflicted.

Again; perhaps, the Spirit of the Lord may be nothing more than a particular modification or exercise of a divine power resident in the Deity. For instance, when it is said,

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in the prophetic language, *Not by might, nor by force, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord*: or, by the evangelical historian, *the Holy Ghost was upon him*. Are not these texts nearly equivalent, in point of signification, to those scriptural expressions, the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass, the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding. Is not this the meaning of the former passage. Not mortal strength, but God's omnipotent aid giveth victory in the battle, and success in every undertaking: and this the import of the latter, the communications of infinite wisdom enlightened his mind in an extraordinary manner?

Were there no other scriptures, which concerned themselves in this debate, I should be ready to give up the point. But there are several, which most strongly imply the personality of the Holy Ghost, though they may not assert it in positive terms. It is true, we meet with no such term as personality in sacred writ, but if we find the thing signified, it is in effect the same. No one can shew me the word resurrection in the whole pentateuch, but will any one presume to maintain, that this doctrine is not to be proved from the books of Moses? Our Lord's famous reply to the insnaring interrogatory of the Sadducees, must for ever silence such a suggestion. And this we may further learn from his method of arguing, that it is not only proper, but our duty, to deduce truths, by fair consequences which the text may not explicitly speak.

Be pleased, Sir, to consider the apostolical benediction, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all*. If we allow the apostle to understand the true import of language, must it not follow from this passage, that the Holy Spirit is a real person, and distinct from the Father and the Son? Otherwise, would not the sacred writer, ought not the sacred writer, to have expressed himself in a different manner; to have said rather, *The fellowship of his, or the fellowship of their Spirit*?—The form of administering baptism is another text of this nature: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. It is evident; I believe, it is allowed by all, that the two first are real dis-

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distinct persons, and is there not equal reason to conclude, that the last mentioned is a person also? Suppose you should endeavour to distinguish three persons in your discourse, what other language would you use than this?—I dare say, Sir, you are sensible, that one scripture proof, if plain in its signification, and incontestible in its evidence, is as valid, as decisive, as one thousand. Because one such proof bears the stamp of infallible wisdom and infinite veracity. Therefore, was there no other hint in all the inspired volumes, but these pregnant words which compose the form of baptism, this single proof would be sufficiently satisfactory to my judgment.

I shall take leave to refer you to a few more evidences, and transcribe only the following: *There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Logos, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*. But this we are told, is a surreptitious text; foisted by the bigotted espousers of a certain favourite set of doctrines. The only resource this of our opposers, when their case becomes desperate; when conviction flashes in their faces; when every other subterfuge fails; then the pretence of spurious and interpolated reading is trumped up. It is not to be found, they cry, in some very ancient copy: perhaps the Alexandrine MS. acknowledges no such passage. But this I must be allowed to question: I dare not take our adversaries bare word, especially, since some of the declared enemies of orthodoxy are not the most exemplary for truth and integrity. However, granting that there may be no such text in the Alexandrine MS. for my part, I should not scruple to abide by the universal testimony of all editions, in all countries, much rather than to give up myself implicitly to the authority of a single MS. I should think it much more reasonable to conclude, that the transcriber of that particular copy, had, through oversight, dropt some sentence, rather than to charge all the other copies with forgery, and the editions of all ages with a gross mistake. Consider, Sir, not only the apparent difficulty, but the moral impossibility of corrupting the sacred books in that palpable manner, which this objection would insinuate; at a time when every private Christian valued them more than life, and spent no day without a diligent contemplation of them;

at a time, when each particular sect read them constantly in their public assemblies, and watched over the genuineness of each text with a most jealous eye. Would it be an easy matter to introduce a supposititious clause into an ordinary will, after it had been solemnly proved at Doctors Commons, and one authentic copy preserved in the archives? If this is scarce possible, how much more unlikely is it, that any one should be able to practise so iniquitously upon the inspired writings, when not one only, but unnumbered copies were deposited in the most vigilant hands, and dispersed throughout the world?

I shall only desire you to consult those other scriptures, Rom xv. 16. 30. John xvi. 13. 14. 15. which, without heaping together a multitude of other proofs, seem to put the matter beyond all rational doubt. In the last of those places, you will take particular notice, that the writer speaks of the Holy Ghost in the masculine gender. How could this consist with propriety of style, upon any other scheme than ours? The expression should have been *it*, not *he*, if the Holy Ghost were a divine energy alone, and not a real person. Nay, it is remarkable, that though Πνευμα be a neuter, yet the historian varies the gender, and gives us a masculine relative, ΟΛΩ ΕΛΘΗ ΕΚΕΙΝΩ, ΕΚΕΙΝΩ ΜΕ ΔΟΞΑΣΗ; and on what principles can this construction be accounted for, or justified, but by allowing the Holy Spirit to be a person? This, I think, is an observation of some consequence; and therefore, accurate writers should beware of using the word *it*, and rather chuse the pronoun *him*, when speaking of this divine Being.

The mention of divine Being reminds me of our second subject of inquiry, viz. Whether the Holy Ghost is very God?—Here I should be glad to know, what kind or degree of evidence will satisfy the inquirers. If we are so far humble and impartial as to prefer the declarations of an unerring word, to the preconceptions of our mind; I think, there is most sufficient proof afforded by the scriptures. Whereas, if we bring not these dispositions to the search, it will be no wonder, if we are bewildered; if we are given up to our own delusions; nay, it will be no incredible, no unprecedented thing, for God to hide these mysteries from such

such (in their own opinion) wise and prudent ones, while he reveals them to (men endued with the simplicity and teachableness of) babes.

Is that being truly God, who is possessed of divine attributes? This question, I imagine, every body will answer in the affirmative. So that if it appears, that the Holy Ghost is invested with the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, our assent will be won, and our dispute at an end.—Is it not the prerogative of the all-seeing God, to search the heart, and try the reins? Jer. xvii. 10. ? and is not this the undoubted prerogative of the blessed Spirit? 1 Cor. ii. 10.—Is eternity an attribute of God, and of God only? Deut. xxxiii. 27. *ο μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. This is clearly the property of the Holy Ghost, who is styled by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, *The eternal Spirit*, Heb. ix. 14.—Is wisdom, underived essential wisdom, a character of God, called by the apostle *μὴ ἐκ σοφῆς σοφίας*, Jude 25. This is the illustrious character of the Holy Ghost. He is *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation*, Eph. i. 17. In consequence of which sacred excellency, he is able to lead his people into all truth.—Is omnipresence a necessary proof of divinity? If so, the Holy Ghost challenges it upon this claim; for thus saith the inspired poet, *Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit?* Psal. cxxxix. 7.—Is omnipotence a sufficient attestation of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost? He that enableth mortals to control the powers, to alter the course, to supersede the fundamental laws of nature; can he be less than the Lord God Almighty? Yet St Paul declares, that his ability to work all manner of astonishing miracles, for the confirmation of his ministry, was imparted to him by the Spirit, Rom. xv. 19.—If any farther proof is demanded, be pleased to consider, with an unprejudiced attention, that very memorable passage, Matth xii. 31. 32. Surely, from an attentive consideration of this text, we must be constrained to acknowledge, that the Holy Ghost is strictly and properly God. Otherwise, how could the sin against him be of so enormous a nature, so absolutely unpardonable, and the dreadful cause of inevitable ruin?—St Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, (vi. 19.) addresses his converts with

with this remarkable piece of instruction, *Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost*. The same apostle, writing to the same believers, in his second epistle, (vi. 16.) has the following expression, *Ye are the temples of the living God*. Who can compare these texts, and yet be so hardy as deliberately to deny, that the Holy Ghost, and the living God, are one and the same? Besides, if these two scriptures, viewed in conjunction with each other, did not ascertain the divinity of the blessed Spirit, the very purport of the expression, *Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost*, sufficiently evinces it. It is certain, that the very essence of a temple, or to speak in the terms of the logician, the *differentia constitutiva* of a temple, consists in the residence of a deity. The inhabitation of the highest created being cannot constitute a temple; nothing but the indwelling of the one infinite, almighty Lord God. Since therefore, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit renders the bodies of Christians temples, it seems to be a clear case, that he is truly God.—Another text, a text never omitted when this point is under debate, and a text, in my opinion, singly sufficient to give a final decision to the doubt, is in Acts v. 3. 4. where the person stiled *Άγιος Πνευμα* in one verse, is expressly declared to be *ο̄ς* in the next. Now, can we imagine, that an evangelist, under the guidance of unerring wisdom, could write with such unaccountable inaccuracy as the deniers of this article must maintain? Were this supposition admitted, I should almost begin to question the inspiration of the sacred books. At this rate, they would seem calculated to confound the judgment, and elude the common sense of the readers. For, to speak so frequently of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—to speak in such language as we always use in distinguishing various persons,—to ascribe to them severally such attributes as, by universal acknowledgment, comport only with the supreme God,—nay, to call each person by himself, distinctly, expressly to call each person God and Lord.—Sure, if after all these declarations, there be not three persons in the one, incomprehensible Godhead; if each of these illustrious persons be not very God;—what can we say, but that the scriptures are inconsistent and self-contradictory pieces?—So that, upon the whole, we are reduced to this dilemma, either

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ther to admit this absurd and impious charge upon the scriptures; or else to acknowledge the personality and divinity of the three persons in the adorable Trinity.

But, perhaps, a curious genius, that has been accustomed to enter deep into the *rationale* of things; that thinks it beneath a sagacious inquirer to credit, unless he can comprehend;—such a genius may ask, with a kind of amazement, *How can these things be?*—Here I pretend to give no satisfaction. Here I confess myself at a loss. I cannot conceive how the principle of gravitation acts, or what constitutes the power of attraction. If I cannot penetrate the hidden qualities of a thousand common objects, that daily present themselves to my senses; no wonder, that I should be unable to unravel the awful secrets of the divine nature; no wonder that I should be incapable of finding out to perfection that infinite Majesty, who dwells in light inaccessible. Since the *TO BE* is attested by a multitude of witnesses from scripture, let us be content to wait for the *TO BE*, till this gross interposing cloud of flesh and mortality flee away; until that happy hour arrives, that desirable state commence, when we shall no longer *see through a glass darkly*, but *shall know even as we are known*.

I should now proceed, according to the ability which the great Source of wisdom may please to bestow, to examine Mr Tomkins's *Calm inquiry*; but this is what my time, claimed by a variety of other engagements, will not permit; and what, I presume, you yourself, tired already by a tedious epistle, will very readily excuse. Hereafter, if you insist upon my executing the plan, laid down in the beginning of this paper, I will communicate my remarks (such as they are) relating to the forementioned treatise, with all that chearful compliance, and unreserved openness, which may most emphatically bespeak me, dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XIV.

On the divinity of Christ.

Dear Sir,

Weston-Favell, Feb. 11. 1745-6.

I Received your ticket some time ago, in which you desire me to consider some particular passages of scripture. After an afflictive indisposition, which confined me to my room several days, I have examined the texts you alledge. They relate, I find, to that grand question, which has lately been the subject of our debate, The Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. I could have wished, that the controversy had been brought to a satisfactory and happy issue. Very unwilling to engage in it a second time, I must beg leave to sue for my *bene decessit*, and resign the management of so important a dispute to incomparably more able hands.—However, in obedience to your request, (*quid enim amicitiae denegandum?*), I shall briefly lay before you my opinion concerning these portions of inspired wisdom; and then proceed, in pursuance of my promise, to weigh, with calmness and impartiality, the most material of Mr Tomkins's objections.

You observe, That the Father is never represented yielding obedience to Christ, or praying to Christ.—I acknowledge the truth of the remark, and assign this clear and obvious reason, because it was the peculiar office of the second person of the Trinity to humble himself, to unite himself to flesh and blood, and to be made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. Had not the blessed Jesus been clothed with our nature, and partook of our innocent infirmities, we should never have heard any such thing, as his yielding obedience, or praying to another, greater than himself. This results not from his essential, but his assumed nature. Nor is it at all repugnant to reason, to be inferior in one character, and at the same time absolutely equal in another. His majesty King George may be inferior to the Emperor, in the capacity of Elector of Hanover; he may be subject to the imperial authority, as

he is a prince of the Germanic body; and yet equal to the most illustrious monarchs, obnoxious to no earthly jurisdiction, in his nobler quality of King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. This seems to be a very easy and natural solution of the difficulty. Whereas, I think, I may venture to defy the nicest metaphysician, or the most acute casuist, to reconcile the notions of divinity and inferiority. As well may contradictions be made compatible. A God, who is inferior, is, to my apprehension, a perfect paradox. It is necessarily implied in the idea of God, that he be, as our old translation of the psalms very emphatically and beautifully styles him, *The Most Highest*. Therefore our Saviour, who often asserts his claim to divinity, declares, as an inseparable consequent of this high prerogative, *All things which the Father hath, are mine*. Is the Father's existence inconceivable and eternal? the same also is the Son's. Has the Father an unequalled absolute supremacy? such likewise hath the Son.

But I see you have ready at hand to object, John xiv. 28. *My Father is greater than I*.—Who are we to understand by the person *I*? Doubtless that Being who was capable of going and coming; who was sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; now with the disciples on earth, anon separated from them by a translation into heaven. And who can this be but the man Christ Jesus; the human nature of our Redeemer? The attribute of limited locality, determines this point with the utmost clearness. Why then should any one apply that property to the Godhead of our blessed Master, which he himself so plainly appropriates to his manhood?

This text very opportunely furnishes us with a key, to enter into the true meaning of your next quotation, 1 Cor. xi. 3. *The head of Christ is God*. Only let St John be allowed to expound St Paul. I ask this single concession from my worthy friend, (and sure it is no unreasonable one), Let us agree to pay a greater deference to the beloved disciple's comment, than to Mr Pierce's paraphrase, or the interpretation of the Arian creed; then the sense will be as follows: The Deity is the head of the Mediator. As the members are conducted by the head, and subservient

vient to the head; so Christ Jesus, in his human capacity, acted and acts in subordination to the Godhead; obeying the significations of his will, and referring all his administrations to his glory. This exposition, I imagine, the context corroborates, and the scope of the apostle's arguing requires.

As for Heb. i. 8. 9. This text affirms, in the most express terms, That Christ is God, $\text{ὁ θεὸς ὁ πατήρ ὁ θεός}$. And what can be a stronger proof of his unrivalled supremacy and sovereignty?—But, perhaps, this may be one of those places, in which we are informed by our objectors, the word God signifies no more than a king or ruler, consequently does not prove our Redeemer to be God in reality, and by nature; but only to be complimented with this appellation, in respect of his office and authority.—I believe, Sir, you will find, upon a more attentive inquiry, that this subtle distinction is contrary to the perpetual use of the scriptures. A very celebrated critic observes that where-ever the name ELOHIM (translated by the apostle ὁ θεός) is taken in an absolute sense, and restrained to one particular person, (as it is in the passage before us), it constantly denotes the true and only God. Magistrates are indeed said to be Elohim, in relation to their office, but no one magistrate was ever so called; nor can it be said, without blasphemy, to any one of them, Thou art Elohim, or God. It is also recorded of Moses, *Thou shalt be Elohim*; yet not absolutely, but relatively only, a God to Pharaoh, and to Aaron, *i. e.* in God's stead, doing in the name of God what he commanded, and declaring what he revealed.—Besides, does not the apostle in this very chapter, vers. 10. address the following acknowledgment to Christ, *Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands*? And is not the work of creation, the unshared prerogative and honour of the supreme God? This I am pretty sure of, it is the prerogative of that God, to whom the worship of the saints, under the Old Testament, is directed; of that God, who has declared himself jealous of his honour, and resolves not to give his glory to another. Melchisedec made this illustrious Being the object of his adoration, *Blessed be the most high God, possessor*

cessor of heaven and earth. The day is thine, and the night is thine: Thou hast prepared the light and the sun; was judged by the psalmist one of the noblest ascriptions of praise which could be made to the Deity. Jonah has left us a confession of his faith, and an abstract of his devotion, in the following words; *I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea, and the dry land.* Yet St Paul assures us, that this great Creator and Proprietor of heaven and earth; this object of divine worship in all ages of the ancient church, is he—ο δι' εαυτε καθαρισμεν ποιησμεν των αμαρτιων ημων, vers. 3.

—Now can we view the magnificent system of the universe, the immensity of its extent, the vast variety of its parts, the inimitable accuracy of its structure, the perfect harmony of its motions, together with the astonishing energy and effects of its mechanic powers,—can we contemplate this world of wonders, and withhold ourselves a single moment from ascribing the glory of incomparable wisdom, and matchless perfections, to its Maker? Can we glance an eye, or start a thought, through that ample field of miracles, which nature in all her scenes regularly exhibits, and still conclude, that the Author of all takes too much upon him, when he advances the following claim?

—————None I know

Second to me, or like, equal much less.

Milton.

Possibly, our sceptical gentlemen are ready to reply, We are far from denying that Christ made the world; but we suppose, that he made it only as a ministerial being; not by any sufficiency of his own, but by a power delegated to him from the infinite Godhead.—But sure the abettors of this opinion never considered that emphatical passage, Παντα δι' αυτου, κ' εις αυτον εχουσιν *. By whatever artful evasion they may think to elude the force of the former expression, I cannot see what possible escape they can contrive from the latter. It is plain from the philosophical principles of an apostle, that the universe was formed by Christ as the almighty Artificer, for Christ as its final end: and is not this a demonstration, that Christ was not a mere instrument,

* Col. i. 16.

but the grand, glorious, self-sufficient agent; the Alpha and Omega of all things?

After all that has been said upon this text, will it be intimated, that I have been partial in my examination of it? that the sentence, which most particularly favours your opinion, and looks with the most frowning aspect on mine, is passed over without notice? namely, where it is taught, that God anointed Christ *with the oil of gladness above his fellows* *.—I reply, by owning, that these words most undeniably imply inferiority: they imply a state of indigence, which wants something, it has not naturally; a state of impotence, which receives from another, what it cannot convey to itself. Surely then, this clause must, according to all the laws of just interpretation, be referred to that nature which admitted of such wants, and was subject to such infirmities. To ascribe it to that nature, which is characterized as God, would be almost as affronting to reason, as it is to the Deity.—It is farther observable, that the very expression limits the sense to that capacity of our Redeemer, in which others stood related to him as his fellows. And can this be any other than the human?—Let me add one word more, before I dismiss this inquiry. Suppose I was to shift sides in the dispute, and turn the tables upon the disciples of Arius. Gentlemen, since you take so much pains to prove the inferiority of our Lord Jesus Christ, permit me to try, if I cannot outshoot you in your own bow. I will undertake to shew, on your own principles, that he was inferior to millions of created beings. For this I have the positive and sure evidence of scripture; *We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels* †.—These gentlemen, I verily think, would have so much regard for the honour of a person on whom their everlasting all depends, as to answer with some becoming spirit; you are to distinguish between what our Saviour was made occasionally, and what he was originally. Though his human nature was taken from a class of beings lower in dignity than the angels, yet his nobler and more exalted nature was greatly superior to them all.—Now, Sir, as we must have recourse sometimes

* Heb. i. 9. † Heb. ii. 9.

to this distinction, our adversaries themselves being our judges and our precedent, why should we not carry it along with us continually? Without it, a multitude of texts appear perplexed in their meaning and clash with other scriptures; with it, they drop their obscurity, are disentangled from their intricacy, and harmonize entirely with the whole tenor of sacred writ.

1 Cor xv. 28. is another scripture pointed out for consideration. This, I confess, is a difficult, and admitting it was (to me at least) an unintelligible passage, nay, directly repugnant to my hypothesis—what would be a rational procedure in this case? To renounce my faith, because I cannot reconcile it with one scripture, though it stands supported by a copious multiplicity of others? If, in debating on any question, there be five hundred ayes, and but one no, I appeal to the conduct of the honourable house of commons, whether it be reasonable, that the point should be carried by the single negative, in opposition to so vast a majority of affirmatives? However, the state of our doctrine is not so bad, nor this text so diametrically opposite to it, as to destroy all hopes of establishing it with a *Nemine contradicente*.—The apostle affirms, that, at the consummation of terrestrial things, when the state of human probation ends, and the number of the elect is completed, then *shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him; that God may be all in all; i. e.* according to my judgment, the Son, at the commencement of that grand revolution, will entirely resign the administration of his mediatorial kingdom: he will no longer act as an advocate or intercessor, because the reasons, on which this office is founded, will cease for ever; he will no longer as a high priest, plead his atoning blood in behalf of sinners, nor as a king dispense the succours of his sanctifying grace, because all guilt will be done away, and the actings of corruption be at an end: he will no longer be the medium of his people's access to the knowledge and enjoyment of the Father, because then they will stand perpetually in the beatific presence, and see face to face, know even as they are known.—I may probably mistake the meaning of the words; but whatever shall appear to be their precise signification, this

this, I think, is so clear as not to admit of any doubt, that it relates to an incarnate person; relates to him, who died for our sins, was buried, and rose again *. And can the surrender of all authority made by the man Jesus Christ, be any bar to his unlimited equality as God?

You refer me to Psal. viii. 5. lxxxii. 1. 6. Exod. xxii. 28. and add, these texts prove that *God* signifies in some places king or ruler.—I acknowledge, that the word *Elohim*, in the aforecited passages, signifies no more than angels, kings, or rulers. But is this a demonstration, that the word JEHOVAH, the incommunicable name, signifies no more than an angel, a king, or a ruler? This is the conclusion our adversaries are to infer: this the point they are to make good, otherwise their attempts drop short of the mark, fly wide from their purpose. Because, it is plain from incontestable authorities, that Jesus is JEHOVAH. This was hinted in a former letter; and, if you please to compare Is. vi. 3. with John xii. 41. you will find another convincing evidence, that the JEHOVAH of the Jews is the Jesus of the Christians.—Besides, in all those places, where the term *God* is used to denote some created being, invested with considerable authority, or possessed of considerable dignity, the connection is such, as absolutely to exclude the person, so denominated, from any title to a divine nature; whereas, when the name *God* is applied to the second person of the Trinity, it is connected with such consequents or antecedents, as necessarily include the idea of divinity and supremacy. For instance, when the apostle recognizes the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in those remarkable words, Rom. ix. 5. *Who is God; lest this idle piece of sophistry should have any room for admittance, he adds a most determining clause, over all, blessed for ever.*—I have called it idle sophistry, for really it is nothing else. Only observe the process of the pretended argument, and you yourself will allow it no better appellation. What is designed for the argument runs thus: Because rulers of distinction have sometimes the title of *Elohim*, therefore Jesus, who has the title of JEHOVAH, is not very God, but

* 1 Cor. xv. 3. 4.

only a ruler of distinction : or, the word *God*, when necessarily determined by the context to some subordinate being, signifies a subordinate being ; therefore, the word *God*, when necessarily determined by the context to signify the supreme God, does not signify the supreme God, but only some subordinate being.—These are the mighty reasonings ; such the formidable artillery, with which the adherents of Arius attack the divinity and equality of our Saviour. May the arms of our foreign enemies, and intestine rebels, be made, in their kind, of such metal, consist of such strength ! and I may venture to address my countrymen in David's encouraging language, *Let no man's heart fail because of them.*

I hope it will not be objected, that I have sometimes mistook the particular point to be discussed, and confounded the divinity of our Lord with his equality to the Father.—I own, I have not been scrupulously careful to preserve any such distinction, because I am persuaded it is perfectly chimerical. Whoever admits the former, grants the latter. The one cannot subsist without the other, or rather, they are one and the same thing. To be equal with the Father is to be divine, and to be divine is to be equal with the Father.—An inferior Deity, was a notion that passed current in the Heathen world ; but we have not so learned the divine nature, as to adopt it into our creed. It is a proposition that confutes itself. The predicate and subject are self-contradictory. God certainly means a being of incomparable, unparallelled glory and perfection. No one will dare to give a lower definition of the Godhead. Yet this the first term of the sentence affirms, the second denies.—Whenever I hear the awful word *GOD*, I form an idea of a being possessed of absolute supremacy. Inferiority is altogether as inconsistent with my apprehension of the Godhead, as a limited extension is with immensity. The schoolmen's maxim is strictly true when applied to the divine nature, That his properties and excellencies, *Non recipiunt magis aut minus.*—Besides, Sir, is there not another apparent inconveniency, another inextricable difficulty, attending this superfine distinction ? Does it not suppose, instead of distinct persons, distinct beings, distinct essences ? That which is inferior cannot be the very same with its superior.

superior. Identity in this case, consists not with inequality. The consequence of this tenet is Polytheism.

For my part, I lay it down as an incontestable principle, such as reason and scripture concur to establish, that whatever, whosoever is God, must be absolutely supreme.—I then proceed to examine, whether the divine names, attributes, honours; those which are incommunicably divine, which flow from the divine essence, which cannot comport with a finite existence, but are the sole prerogative of the unequalled God—whether these are in scripture clearly ascribed to the sacred person of the Son—if they are, my reason requires me to believe that he is very God, and co-equal with the Father. My reason, in her sedatest moments, assures me, that scripture cannot deceive, though I may be unable to conceive. My reason declares, that I shall be a rebel against her laws, if I do not submit to this determination of scripture, as decisive, as infallible.

I am, &c.

A
L E T T E R X V.

On the Holy Ghost's being the object of divine worship.

Dear Sir,

Weston-Favell, March, 1745-6.

I N a former letter, I considered, whether the blessed Spirit is really a distinct person—whether this person is truly and properly God—it appeared from a variety of scriptures, that both these questions were to be resolved in the affirmative.—These preliminaries being settled, I would hope, with some perspicuity of reason, and strength of argument; I now proceed, in consequence of my engagement, to examine Mr Tomkins's objections against the received custom of addressing divine worship to this divine Being.

The author, I freely acknowledge, writes with a great appearance of integrity; with a calm and decent spirit of controversy; and with a very plausible air of truth. As the subject of his inquiry is of the highest dignity and importance, as his method of managing the debate is, to say the least, by no means contemptible, I cannot forbear ex-

pressing some surprise, that none of the ingenious dissenters, to whom the piece is particularly inscribed, have thought proper to interest themselves in the dispute, and either confute what is urged, or else (like persons of that inviolable attachment to the pure scriptural worship, which they profess) recede from the use of their allowed doxologies.

For my part, as I firmly believe it a proper practice to worship the Son, as we worship the Father, and to worship the Holy Ghost, as we worship the other persons of the undivided Trinity, I am so far from disapproving, that I admire our customary doxology, and think it a very noble and instructive part of our sacred service. Noble, because it exhibits one of the grand mysteries, and glorious peculiarities of the gospel; instructive, because it so frequently reminds the worshipper of a point which it so greatly concerns him to believe, and which is fitted to inspire the brightest, the strongest hopes, of final, of complete salvation.

But lest this persuasion should be deemed the crude production of early prejudice, rather than the mature fruit of sedate consideration, we will very readily hear whatever can be alledged against it; and not willingly secrete one objection, or misrepresent one argument, occurring in the inquiry.

“Let it be supposed,” says our author, “that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Godhead; I still query, what warrant Christians have for a direct and distinct worship of this third person in the Godhead?” (pag. 1.)—I should think, there can be no reasonable doubt, whether worship is to be paid to the divinity. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God*, is a law of incontestable authority, and eternal obligation.—As for the circumstances of worship included in its being direct, this cannot alter the case, nor render the practice improper. According to my apprehension, all true and genuine worship is direct. If it be addressed to the divine object at second hand, it has more of the nature of idolatry, than worship. Such is the religious foppery of the Papists, who will not apply directly to the Father of everlasting compassions, but adore God as it were by proxy.—With regard to the distinctness of the worship, this depends entirely upon the scripture’s distinguishing

distinguishing their persons. If this be clearly done, the distinctness of worship is properly authorized, and the fitness of it follows of course. If the inspired writers assure us, that the Father is God, this is a sufficient warrant to pay divine honours to the Father. If the inspired writers affirm, that the Son is God, this is a sufficient ground for ascribing divine honours to the Son. If the same inspired writers declare, that the Holy Ghost is God, we need no clearer warrant, nor can we have a louder call, to pay him our devoutest homage.—In a word, it is the voice of reason, it is the command of scripture, it is founded on the unalterable relations of things, that worship, direct worship, distinct worship, all worship, be rendered to the Deity.—So that the divinity of the Holy Ghost, exclusive of any apostolical precept or example, is an incomparably better reason for ascribing divine honours to this sacred person, than the bare want of such precept or example, can be a reason to justify the omission, or condemn the performance of it.

I am no advocate for implicit faith in any human determination or opinion. Should I see whole sects, or whole churches, in a glaring error, such as I can prove from scripture to be palpably wrong, and of pernicious tendency, I would make no scruple to remonstrate, dissent, and enter my protest. But in a case, which Mr Tomkins himself (page 2. line 19.) allows to be of a dubious nature; where I have no positive proof from God's holy word, that the practice is unlawful, or improper; I cannot but apprehend, that it becomes a modest person, diffident of his own judgment, to acquiesce in the general, the long continued usage of all the churches.—This is urged by an inspired writer as a forcible motive for rejecting a practice, and why should not I admit it as a motive of weight for adhering to a practice? *We have no such custom, neither the churches of God* *, was an apostolical argument. And, in an instance, where we are not precluded by any prohibition of scripture, I think, the reasoning is equally conclusive, if changed to the affirmative, *We have such a custom, and the*

* 1 Cor. xi. 16.

churches of God.—Was I to settle my opinion, and adjust my conduct, with regard to such a point, I should be inclined to argue in the following manner: I cannot bring one text from the sacred writings, which forbids the usage; and as it is unanimously practised by devout persons of almost every denomination; as it has been the received, the uninterrupted practice of the Christian church for more than a thousand years; who am I, that I should disturb the peace, or separate myself from the communion of the church, for a procedure, which such multitudes of excellent persons maintain to be consonant, and which I cannot prove to be contrary, to the sense of scripture? Who am I, that I should fancy myself to have more of the mind of God, than the whole united church of true believers, eminent saints, and illustrious martyrs?

“ But there is no precept for this worship in scripture,” (pag. 1.) and Dr Owen affirms, “ That a divine command “ is the ground” (he means, I presume, the only ground, or else the quotation is nothing to our author’s purpose) “ of all worship,” (pag. 25.)—Dr Owen’s character, I own, is considerable, as well as his assertion peremptory; but yet I cannot prevail on myself to submit to his *ipse dixit* as an oracle, nor reverence his judgment as infallible.—I would ask the doctor, What divine command the Heathens ever received to worship the blessed God? I know of no verbal or written precept. But they saw their warrant included in their wants, they perceived their obligation resulting from the divine attributes.—Will Dr Owen maintain, That no worship was expected from the Pagans? That they had been blameless, and acted according to the principles of their duty, if they had with-held all acts of veneration from the Deity? No, surely, St Paul, in declaring them faulty, for not worshipping the Almighty in such a rational manner, as was suitable to his pure and exalted nature, clearly intimates, that it was their duty both to worship, and to worship aright. It is not said by the apostle, though it is the consequence of the doctor’s position, that they ought to have refrained from all worship, and not have meddled with matters of devotion, till they received an authentic warrant from revelation.

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The inspired casuist grounds his duty, in this particular, upon the eternal power and Godhead (Rom. i. 20.) of the supreme Being, which were discoverable by the exercise of their understandings, and from a survey of the creation.—In conformity to the apostle's sentiments, I should rather place the foundation of religious worship in the glories, the mercies, the unfathomable riches of the almighty Majesty. These, together with the relation which dependent creatures bear to this all-producing, all-sustaining, infinitely beneficent God, are the grand warrant to authorize addresses of adoration. These are reasons prior to all express revelations, and would have subsisted, if actual commands had never been given. If this be not true, what will become of all natural religion?—Scripture, indeed, has declared explicitly the binding nature of these motives; scripture, like a sacred herald, has promulged what God fore-ordained, what reason had decreed, what necessarily flowed from the habitudes of persons and things. Or, to represent the point in another light, The perfections of the Godhead are the original, the inviolable obligation to all expressions of homage and devotion; to ratify this obligation, and impart to it all possible solemnity and sanction, scripture has added the broad seal of Heaven.—If this be right reason, and if the Holy Ghost be really God, his all-sufficient excellencies, and my state of dependence, are a proper licence, or rather a virtual mandamus, for the applications of prayer, and the ascriptions of praise. Grant this one proposition, relating to the divinity of the blessed Spirit, and admit that his eternal power and Godhead are a sufficient ground for religious worship, and we shall find ourselves unavoidably determined. We must rebel against our reason, must violate the dictates of our conscience, must act in opposition, not to one particular text, but to the main tenor and scope of the whole scripture, if we do not render all the service, yield all the reverence due to a glorious Being, in whom we live, move, and exist.

But still we are told, in various places, again and again we are told, "That there is no express warrant."—Prodigious stress is laid upon this word *express*, the whole force of the objection seems to terminate on this point. There is

is no express warrant, therefore it is an unwarrantable practice.—For my part, I have not discernment enough to perceive the conclusiveness of this arguing: I must beg leave to deny the consequence of such a syllogism. For if the sense of various scriptures has made it a duty, this is warrant enough, though it be not particularly enjoined, or tolerated in form. This maxim our ingenious author will admit in other cases, and why not in the present? There is no express command to add any prayer at the celebration of baptism. When our Lord instituted the ordinance, he only delivers the form of initiation into the Christian church, without any prescription relating to concomitant prayer. When Philip administered this sacrament to the eunuch, there is no mention of any address to the Almighty, pertinent to the occasion. I cannot recollect, that any of the holy writers either inform the world, that they practised such a method themselves, or so much as intimate, that they would advise others, in succeeding ages, to accompany this solemnity with suitable devotions.—But though we have no positive injunction, we have the reasonableness of the thing, for our plea. Other scriptures that virtually, though not explicitly, recommend it, are our warrant. In every thing, says St Paul, let your requests be made known unto God: consequently, in this sacred and important thing.

I must again declare, that I can by no means assent to our author's grand postulatam, that nothing in the way of divine worship is allowable, but what has an express warrant from scripture. Because virtual warrants, are warrants; consequential warrants, are warrants. Our objector must maintain this in some instances, and why should he disclaim it in others? To be consistent in conduct, is surely essential to the character of an impartial inquirer after truth. Shall such an one sometimes reject an argument as weak and insignificant, because it happens to be illative only, and not direct; and at other times urge it as cogent and irrefragable? I will mention one very memorable particular of this nature; that is the case of the Lord's day. Why does Mr Tomkins transfer the sanctification of a particular day from the seventh to the first? Has he any express command
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in scripture, any express warrant from scripture, for this alteration? If he has, let him produce it. I must own, I have none but consequential warrants; warrants formed upon conclusions, and derived from some remarkable scriptures. But these not near so numerous, nor near so ponderous, as those which concur to establish the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Now if an express warrant be not needful in the one, why should it be so rigorously insisted on in the other duty?—If then this leading principle of our author's be false or precarious, what truth, what certainty can there be in any, in all his deductions from it? If the ground-work be unsubstantial, and the foundation fall, what solidity can there be in the superstructure? how can the building stand?

Possibly Mr Tomkins may reply, “The example of the primitive church determines this point.” We find, it was the custom of the earliest antiquity, to observe the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week; and therefore have very good reason to believe, that the usage was established by apostolical authority—And may not I say the same, with regard to the custom of ascribing glory, and rendering adoration, to the third person of the Trinity? Justin Martyr, the most ancient and authentic apologist for Christianity, who is next in succession, and next in credit to the *Patres Apostolici*, he declares expressly, that it was the received custom of the Christian church, in his days, to worship the Holy Ghost. His words are Πνευμα προφητικον, στι μετα λογου τιμωμεν, αποδειξομεν. You perceive, he not only avows the thing, but vindicates its reasonableness and propriety.—Perhaps, some captious critic may insinuate, that it is matter of doubt, whether the word—τιμωμεν—implies divine honours.—I wave all attempts to prove this point from the original of the New Testament, because, to obviate such an objection, we have another passage to produce from the same saint, father, and martyr.—Πνευμα προφητικον σιδομεθα και προσκυνουμεν, *Apol.* 1. Can any expressions be imagined more forcible in their signification, or more apposite to our purpose? They import the highest acts of adoration, and yet they describe the regards which were paid by the purest antiquity to the Holy Ghost.—Will it still be

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suggested, that Justin makes no mention of offering up prayers; or addressing praises? I answer, this he must certainly mean, because no one can be said—*σεβσδας και προσκυνησας τω Θεω η τω Πνευμα*—who with-holds praise, or restrains prayer. These particular instances are as necessarily implied in those general terms, as the species is included in the genus.

You will please to observe, that this amounts to a great deal more than Mr Tomkins, (page 17.) not very ingenuously suggests, viz. “A few hints that learned men have found, in the primitive ages, of the ascription of praise to the Holy Ghost.” It seems also entirely to overthrow what, in another place, he advances (page 26.) not very consistently with truth, viz. “that there is so little appearance of the observance of such a custom, for so many ages of the Christian church.”—Few hints and little appearance! Can a clear and determinate declaration, made by a writer of the most unquestionable veracity, concerning the unanimous, the universal practice of the ancient church—can this evidence, with any fairness or equity, be rated at the diminutive degree of hints and little appearance?

As to what is remarked relating to the corruption of the early writers, the interpolations, or alterations made by careless transcribers, (page 17.) this seems to be a most empty and jejune insinuation. It is what will serve any side of any debate. It is opposing hypothesis to fact; precarious and unsupported hypothesis, to clear and undeniable fact. This sure is catching, not at a twig, but at a shadow.—I never could like Dr Bentley's *Oscitantia & Hallucinatia Librariorum*, even in his animadversions on Heathen authors: because it was an outcry fitted for any occasion, a charge ever ready at hand, and equally suited to discountenance truth, or detect error. Much less can I think it sufficient to overthrow the testimony, or invalidate the authenticity of our ancient Christian writers.—Would a bare innuendo, (and Mr Tomkins's is no more), and that from an interested person, without any the least shew of proof; would this be admitted, in a court of judicature, to supersede the plain, the solemn deposition of a credible witness? Supersede it? Quite the reverse. It would convince

vince the judge, and teach the jury, that the cause must be extremely wrong, utterly unsupportable, since artifices so weak and transparently fallacious were used in its defence.

But, it is frequently objected, that no mention is made, no warrant is to be found for distinct worship. The aforementioned writer, and the whole scripture is silent upon the article of distinct worship. And the reader is led to suppose, that there is some mighty difference between distinct, and I know not what other kind of worship.—Why does our author harp so incessantly upon this string? Whence such irreconcilable aversion to this quality of worship? one would almost suspect, he was conscious, that some worship should be paid, but could not digest the doctrine, nor submit to the payment of distinct worship.—I must reply once for all, that if any worship be due, distinct worship cannot be improper; much more if all worship (which, I apprehend, is included in Justin's words, and follows from the divinity of the blessed Spirit) be requisite, distinct worship cannot be unwarrantable.

Another grand argument, urged by our inquirer, is, "that the apostles, as far as appears, never practised this worship of the Holy Ghost themselves, nor recommended it to others," (page 2.)—He should, by all means, have printed *as far as appears* in Italics, or capitals. Because then the reader would have apprehended more easily the uncertain foundation on which the reasoning is built.—But though this particular, relating to the practice of the apostles, does not appear, one way or the other, yet our author in his 4th page, and elsewhere, concludes from it as assuredly as if it stood upon authentic record. "For," says he, if we admit, that the reason of things is sufficient to establish this practice, it will prove too much;" it will, undoubtedly, if it proves any thing, prove it a duty to pay such worship to the Holy Spirit; and, consequently, that the apostles were defective, either in not seeing this reason of things as well as we, or not practising according to it. Does he not here suppose, the apostolical omission an acknowledged, undoubted point? which, a few lines before, he had confessed to be dubious and unapparent.

However, not to insist upon this little self-contradicting slip, I would ask, what reason has Mr Tomkins to conclude, that the apostles omitted this usage, which the Christian churches have adopted? Do they ever declare, or so much as hint, that they are determined to omit it? Do they ever caution their converts against it, as a dangerous error? Is there any such memorial preserved, or any such caveat lodged, in their sacred writings?—Now, to argue in our author's strain: If it was so unjustifiable a thing to address praise, or put up prayer to the Holy Ghost, there could not be a more necessary precaution, than that the apostles, those careful instructors, should have warned their people of the mistake; especially, since it was so extremely probable, so almost unavoidable, that they would fall into it. For I appeal to the whole world, whether a considerate person would not naturally judge it reasonable, whether a devout person would not feel a forcible inclination, to worship that venerable Name, into which he was baptized; and to praise that beneficent Being, who is the author of so many inestimable blessings. Yet though this is so apparently natural, such as the apostles could not but foresee was likely to happen, they say not a syllable, by way of prevention; they take no care to guard their converts against such a practice. A pregnant sign, that it is allowed by divine wisdom, and chargeable neither with superstition, nor idolatry.

But our author, to corroborate his argument, adds, “To suppose the apostles directed any explicit worship to the Holy Ghost, though we have no mention of it in scripture, where yet we meet with frequent doxologies of theirs, and addresses by way of prayer or petition,” would be an unreasonable presumption.—I cannot accede to this assertion. The doxologies and prayers of the apostles, recorded in scripture, are only occasional and incidental; inserted as the fervour of a devout spirit suggested in the body of their doctrinal and exhortatory writings. Now the omission of such a practice in writings, which were composed with a view of instructing mankind in the great fundamentals of Christianity, which were never intended as a full and complete system of devotions;—the omission of

this practice in such writings, can be no fair or conclusive argument for its being omitted in their stated acts of public worship. If, indeed, the apostles had, in their epistolary correspondence, drawn up a form of devotions; had declared that in them was comprized a perfect pattern of devotional addresses, proper to be offered to the Deity; that all acts of worship, which deviated a jot or tittle from that prescribed form, were unwarrantable;—if such a composition had been transmitted from the apostles, and we had formed no such addresses therein, as those for which we are pleading, I should then allow a good deal of force in the argument drawn from the apostolical omission; though at the same time I could not be able to forbear wondering at the inconsistency of their doctrines, which teach us that the Holy Ghost is God, and of their worship, which refuses him divine honours.—But, I think, as the case stands, no solid argument, nothing but a specious cavil, can be formed from this circumstance of its being unpractised in the writings of the apostles.

“ It does not appear that the apostles addressed distinct worship to the blessed Spirit; therefore we conclude, that they actually addressed none.” As though fact and appearance were convertible terms.—I am surprized, that an author of Mr Tomkins's penetration can prevail upon himself to be satisfied, or should offer to impose upon his readers, with a deduction so very illogical. Is the not appearing of a thing, a certain argument, or indeed any argument at all, for its not existing? It does not appear, that there are mountains, or groves, or rivers beneath our horizon. It does not appear, that there are any such vessels as lymphatics, any such fluid as the chyle, in these living bodies of ours. But by comparing them with others that have been dissected; and by reasoning from indisputable principles, relating to the animal œconomy, we assure ourselves of the reality of both these particulars.—Consider, Sir, into what unnumbered absurdities, and evident falsehoods, this way of arguing would betray us, if pursued in all its consequences. It will prove, if we once admit it as a test of truth, that nothing was transacted by scriptural men, but what is particularly recorded in scripture-history. I no where read

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Isaac circumcised his son Jacob, or instructed his household after the example of his father Abraham. But shall we infer, from the silence of scripture, with regard to these matters, that he never conformed to the former institution, nor performed the latter service? I should much rather believe that, as he bears the character of a godly man, he walked in both these statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And, since the apostles uniformly agree in this grand premise, that the Holy Ghost is God, it seems much more reasonable to conclude from hence, that they paid him direct worship, than from their bare silence to infer, that they neglected this practice.—I no where read in the sacred writings, that St Peter suffered martyrdom, or sealed the testimony of Christ with his blood. But must we, on this account, persuade ourselves, that he was not one of the noble army of martyrs? No, you will say; it is very supposable, that he laid down his life for his Saviour, even though this event is not expressly recorded, because our Lord clearly predicts it, when he informs him, by what death he should glorify God. And may not I reply, with parity of reason, It is very supposable, that the apostles, in their solemn devotions, addressed direct distinct worship to the Holy Ghost, because their declaring their belief in his personality and divinity, was a strong intimation that they should, was a sort of prediction that they would, render all kind of homage and adoration to him.—Upon the whole, if this be a mere presumption, no better than a *gratis dictum*, that the apostles did not worship the Holy Ghost, then all the specious arguments, derived from hence, drop of course.

Our objector still insists, “That this is not a necessary part of Christian worship,” (page 2.)—Be pleased to observe, how he departs from his first proposal. His first inquiry, that which the title-page exhibits, was, whether this be warrantable; then, with an evasive dexterity, he slips into another topic, and maintains, that it cannot be necessary. Whether this be tergiversation or inaccuracy, I shall not stay to examine; but must ask Mr Tomkins, what reason he has for this positive determination, that it cannot be necessary?—Because, on the contrary supposition, “We shall condemn the apostles as guilty
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"of a great omission," (page 2.)—This argument the author uses more than once, therefore I may be excused in replying to it once again. We can have no pretence to condemn the apostles, till we have undeniable proof that there was such an omission in their conduct. Who can assert, who dares maintain, that, when the apostles were met together in the holy congregation, for large, solemn, copious devotion, they never recognized the divinity of the three sacred persons, never addressed distinct acts of praise or invocation to each respectively? This Mr Tomkins may persist in supposing; but after all he can suggest, in vindication of this principle, it will amount to no more than a bare supposal. I may, at least, as fairly suppose the very reverse: and, I think, have the suffrage of reason, the analogy of scripture, the consent of the purest antiquity on my side.—However, in case Mr Tomkins had demonstrated, by incontestable evidence, that the practice under consideration cannot be necessary; does he confine himself, in every instance, to what is strictly necessary? does he not allow himself in what is expedient? Could I not mention various particulars, which are not absolutely necessary, but yet they are decent and useful; they contribute to the beauty and harmony of worship, to the comfort and edification of the worshippers? Perhaps, it may not be necessary to particularize in our devotions the present distress of our nation, and to form particular petitions suitable to our national exigencies, or particular thanksgivings accommodated to our national deliverances. But since this is very expedient; since it tends to beget in all a more lively sense of our dependence on divine providence; since it is a most emphatical method of ascribing to the supreme Disposer the glory of all our public mercies; this practice is very becoming, very proper, very useful. Should I plead, in opposition to this custom, that it is not absolutely necessary; Your prayers may be acceptable to God, and beneficial to your country, without such particularizing; St Paul gives no express command, sets no explicit example of any such usage; there is no precedent from any of the apostles, where the affairs of the state, under which they lived, are particularly displayed before God in humble supplication;—would Mr Tom-

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kins think this a sufficient reason for him in his private, or for ministers in their public devotions, to discontinue the practice? No, verily: the propriety, the expediency of the thing, would justify and ascertain its use, even though no scriptural pattern had recommended, no scriptural precept enjoined it.

It is affirmed, (page 5.) "that the addresses of the New Testament are always made to the Father, or to the Son:" and it is added, (page 10.) "that there is neither rule nor example in it for worshipping any other person what-ever."—This point our author affirms with a very positive air, as though it were incapable of being controverted; and therefore, often builds assertions on it, often makes deductions from it. Suppose it was an undeniable truth, I think, we have shewn, that it can be no satisfactory proof, that in all the enlarged devotions of the apostles, no addresses were offered to the blessed Spirit, because a few short ejaculations made no explicit mention of him.—But this assertion, perhaps, upon a closer examination, may appear too bold and unjustifiable; somewhat like the position which has been advanced with regard to the sentiments of the primitive writers, and practice of the primitive church. It might be proper to consider, on this occasion, 2 Thess. iii. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and patience of Christ.* This you will allow to be a prayer of benediction. You will also observe, that here is particular mention of three persons. The Lord, who is the object of the invocation, and bestower of the blessing, is neither the Father, nor the Son. And who then can it be, but the Holy Ghost? whose amiable office it is, to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts*.—It will not, I presume, be intimated, that this is the only passage of the kind. For, were it the only one, yet where the evidence is infallible, we need not the mouth of two or three witnesses to establish the matter in debate. However, for further satisfaction, we may consult 1 Thess. iii. 11. 12. 13. 2 Thess. ii. 16. If we consider these texts in conjunction with those scriptures which speak of the Holy Ghost as a

* Rom. v. 5.

distinct person, we shall perceive a beautiful propriety, and a particular emphasis, in understanding the verses as mentioning the sacred persons severally. The latter text especially, considered in this view, is extremely pertinent, has a very admirable propriety, and agreeably to a maxim laid down by a great master of correct writing :

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, and our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work. Supposing the three persons implored in this supplication, every thing that is attributed to each, has a perfect conformity with that part, which each is represented as acting, in the blessed work of redemption; *e. g.* Our Father, who hath loved us; for God so loved the world, saith St John, that he gave his only begotten Son. God, the Holy Ghost, who hath given us everlasting consolation; for it is the peculiar office of the blessed Spirit to administer comfort, called therefore the *Paraclete*. Jesus Christ, who hath given us good hope through grace; we have hope in Christ, saith the apostle to the Corinthians, and nothing is more frequently celebrated, by the apostolical writers, than the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Behold then a pertinency, a beauty, a significant distinction, and an exact harmony between all the parts of this verse, if taken in our sense; but a strange, confused tautological kind of diction, if you disallow, that the three divine persons are distinctly applied to.

Page 6. it is suggested, “ That we may incur the re-
“ sentment of the other two persons, as shewing a neglect
“ or disrespect to them, if, of our own heads, we should in
“ any peculiar and distinguishing form, worship the Father.”
—This, sure, is a most unworthy insinuation, as though the infinitely sublime and glorious persons of the Godhead were meanly ambitious, or weakly jealous. This is measuring the Deity, not by our reason, which is a very incompetent standard; not by our senses, which are still
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more inadequate judges; but even by our sordid and vile affections.—But not to insist upon this gross error; not to aggravate this affront offered to the adorable Trinity; this intimation, and others of the like strain, seem to be founded on a great mistake, with relation to the nature of the Godhead. The essence is one, though the persons are distinct. So that whatever honour is paid to any person, is paid to the one undivided essence. If we call Jesus the Lord, St Paul assures us, it is to the glory of God the Father. Whoever sees the Son, our Saviour himself declares, sees the Father also; (*i. e.*) whoever has a right understanding of the Son, and sees by faith his divine excellencies; that man sees, is acquainted with, the perfections of the Father also. And for this obvious reason, because the Father and Son are one. And will not this hold good with regard to the Holy Spirit?—If so, whatever honour is paid to one, is paid to all the three sacred persons: or rather, whatever devout ascriptions of praise are addressed to either of the divine persons, they are addressed to the one living incomprehensible God.—I wish Mr Tomkins had attended to this consideration. It might have guarded him against some other unwary expressions, which imply the notion of Polytheism; particularly that in page 10. where he tells us, “that the scripture sets forth the “Father and the Son as the objects of worship.” I cannot find any such representation in scripture. The scripture is uniform and consistent, and speaking of but one God, speaks of but one object of divine worship, *viz.* the infinite Deity, distinguished by a threefold personality. This may seem strange; but since we have the Saviour’s word, and the apostle’s evidence, to support the tenet, it should, methinks, be admitted as true. This may seem strange, but is it therefore to be rejected as false? At this rate, we must deny the existence of a thousand phenomena in nature; we must explode as impossibilities numberless apparent facts.

Page 7. The inquirer advances a very unaccountable proposition. “It should seem,” says he, “that the Son of “God had quitted for that time (during his humiliation) “his claim to divine worship; though it should be granted

“ed that he did receive divine worship before.”—I must ask with the Jewish ruler, How can these things be? Can God abandon his divinity? Can he cease to be supremely great and good? Is he not, I would not say by the necessity, but by the absolute perfection of his nature, to-day, and yesterday, and for ever the same? If so, it seems impossible, that creatures should, for so much as a single instant, be released from the duty of adoration; it seems impossible, with reverence be it spoken, that God should relinquish his claim to their profoundest homage. This would be to deny himself; which the apostle reckons among the *ad. vata*, 2 Tim. ii. 13. *ἀρνησάμενος εαυτόν & διῶλαν*.—This tenet, I imagine, is contrary, not only to reason, but to scripture. I should be pleased to know, whether Mr Tomkins, when he was composing this paragraph, recollected that memorable saying of our Lord, John iii. 13. *No man hath ascended into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man* (ὁ υἱ, not ο υἱ, or ο εσομεν) *who is in heaven*. Is not this a manifest proof, that our Saviour was in heaven by his divine nature, even while his human nature was sojourning on earth, or confined within the limits of a scanty apartment? And if the divine Son while holding, in his humanity, a conference with Nicodemus, was present by his Godhead in the heavenly regions, could the angels be insensible of his presence? And if sensible of his presence, could they withhold their adoration?—*Credat Judæus Apella, non ego*.—Let Socinians, and men that are called Infidels, believe such an absurdity. I cannot reconcile it to my apprehensions.—Our Lord emptied himself, it is true; because, when he appeared among mortals, he appeared without the pomp and splendor of his celestial majesty. He suffered no such glory to irradiate and adorn his person, as surrounded him on the mount of transfiguration, and will invest him when he comes to judge the world: but was, in all things, such as we are, sin only excepted. Thus he humbled himself, not by disrobing his eternal Godhead of its essential dignity, but by withholding the manifestations of it, in that inferior nature, which he was pleased to assume.

Page 8. Our author seems to mistake the meaning of that

royal edict, issued out in the heavenly world, *Let all the angels of God worship him* *. He supposes this was a command to worship the Son in the sublime capacity of God over all. This, surely, could not be the sense of the words. Because, a command of such an import, must be needless. This was the natural, the unchangeable, the indispensable duty of all creatures: and such as those superior intelligences could not but easily discern, such as those upright spirits could not but readily obey, without any particular injunction. The command, therefore, I apprehend, is rather referable to the humanity of our blessed Redeemer; to that nature in *Immanuel*, which purged away our sins, by becoming a propitiatory sacrifice. This was made higher than the angels. This had an illustrious name given it, to which every knee should bow. This was exalted into heaven, angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto the man Christ Jesus. If this remark be true, then our author's interpretation is erroneous; consequently, his round-about argument, derived from a mistaken principle, must fall to nothing.

Page 12. In the note our objector asks, "Did the people of Israel, upon hearing these words, *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt*, ever imagine, that there were three persons then speaking?" — This question, I suppose, is intended to invalidate the doctrine of the Trinity. But the great article stands upon a rock, too impenetrable to be undermined by such an interrogatory, too immovable to be shaken by such a suggestion. I pretend not to give a categorical answer to the query, but only desire to observe, that the people of Israel have several intimations, in their sacred books, of a plurality of persons in the unity of the divine essence. They were accustomed to hear Moses speak in the plural number, when he relates the wonderful work of creation, *Let us make man*. Their inspired and royal preachers spoke of the almighty Maker of them, and of all things, in plural terms, *Remember now thy Creator* †, in the original *Creators*. The prophets acknowledged and teach this grand mystery,

* Heb. i. 6. † Eccl. xii. 1.

particularly the evangelical prophet Isaiah, chap. lxiii. 9. 10. So that, if the children of Jacob and Joseph were ignorant of this awful truth, it seems owing rather to the blindness of their understandings, than to the want of proper discoveries from above.—But be the case, as it is supposed, with regard to the Jews. Are we obliged to copy their ignorance? Must their sentiments be our guide? their imaginations the model of our creed? Surely, for a Christian to argue, or even to surmise, that there is no such thing, because the ancient Jews were not acquainted with it, is altogether as unreasonable, as it would be unphilosophical to maintain, that there are no such places as America, or Greenland, because they were both unknown to the ancient inhabitants of Canaan.—Mr Tomkins cannot but know, that it is the excellency of the evangelical dispensation, to take off the veil from the Mosaical: that we, by comparing their law with our gospel, by applying the interpretation of our apostles to the doctrines of their prophets, are able to see clearly, what they perceived but dimly. *Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, says St Stephen, as your fathers did, so do ye* *. If this reproof be compared with the several narratives, recorded in the Old Testament, concerning the stiff-necked and refractory behaviour of the Jews, we shall gather, by the clearest deduction, that the Holy Ghost is JEHOVAH. Perhaps, the Israelites, when they heard the psalmist playing upon his harp, and singing this congratulatory hymn of praise, *Thou art ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for thy enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them* †.—The Israelites, I say, upon hearing these words, might not be aware, that the person who ascended up on high, was the blessed Jesus; and that the Lord God dwelling among, dwelling in depraved disobedient mortals, to renew and reclaim them, was the Holy Ghost. But we, by collating Eph. iv. 8. with the former part of the verse; and John xiv. 17. Rom. viii. 11. with the latter, are, to our exceeding great consolation, brought to the knowledge of these glorious doctrines.

* Acts vii. 51. † Psal. lxviii. 18.

Page 14. Our author observes, "That Dr Watts would prove the propriety of paying divine worship to the Holy Ghost, from the form of administering baptism."—This argument he undertakes to invalidate. He proceeds in a very unexpected manner; springs a mine, of which we were not at all apprehensive. What if it should turn to the overthrow of his own tenet?—The Doctor maintains, "that baptism is a piece of worship."—Our author replies, "That hearing the word, in the public assemblies, may also be reputed a piece of worship."—May it so? Then, *Ex ore tuo*.—Your own concession confutes your opinion. For, if to hear the word with assiduity, with reverence, with an humble expectation of its becoming the instrument of our salvation.—If this be a species of worship, it is, doubtless, a worship paid to him, who is the author and giver of the word. Now, we are sure, that it was the Holy Ghost, who spake by the prophets, who spake by the apostles, who spake all the words of that life, which, in our religious congregations, are explained and enforced.

Page 15. Mr Tomkins urges the expression of St Paul, 1 Cor. x. 2. which I cannot forbear suspecting, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of charity, which thinketh no evil, he wilfully misunderstands. It is evident, on the very first glance, that Moses, in that place, cannot mean the man Moses; but the system of religion, the body of laws, moral, judicial, and ceremonial, which were, by him, delivered to the Jews. Is it therefore a proof, that to be baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost is no act of worship to that divine person, because it was no act of worship to Moses, to have been baptized into an œconomy instituted by God, and only promulged by Moses?

For my part, I am stedfastly persuaded, that to be baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, is a very noble and sublime kind of worship; not to say, an indispensable obligation to all other instances and degrees of worship.—It is coupled with that greatest of Christian duties, believing. Which I take to be a worship of the mind, far more important than any bodily homage; without which, all external expressions of adoration are mere formality. *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.*—I verily think, no one will deny,

deny, that baptism is, at least, equal in its import, to circumcision; instead of which it seems to be substituted. Now circumcision was evidently a token and ratification of the covenant of JEHOVAH. It was a visible attestation to the person circumcised, that the Lord was his God, engaged by covenant to protect, bless, and make him finally happy. It was a solemn declaration of an absolute self-surrender to the blessed God, to acknowledge him for the only Lord, to serve him in all dutiful obedience, to seek his glory, and to be resigned to his will. This seems to have been the meaning of that divinely appointed rite, emphatically expressed in those words of the Jewish legislator, *Thou hast this day avouched the Lord to be thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people* *.—And can we imagine, that baptism, which has superseded circumcision, is inferior to it in significance? Or can we imagine, that these solemn acts of recognizing the Lord for our only God, and consecrating ourselves to his honour, are no expressions of worship?

Though this dedication of ourselves to the service of the Holy Ghost should be implied in the ordinance of baptism, "still it must be granted," replies our author, "that this can be no other service of the Spirit, than what is enjoined in the New Testament," (Page 15.)—Thereby insinuating, that it is somewhat different from the service we stand engaged to yield both to the Father, and to the Son. But according to all the allowed methods of speech, the baptized person is dedicated alike to each of the three sacred persons; he avows them all to be the object of his worship, and the author of his salvation. There is no manner of difference in the terms which specify the obligations; and since divine wisdom has made them the same, why should we presume to pronounce them diverse?—How unaccountably strange would the baptismal form be, on our objector's interpretation; I baptize thee into an obligation to adore, to obey, to worship the Father and the Son; but not to pay the same reverential and devout regards to the Holy

Ghost? What writer of ingenuity, in order to support a singular hypothesis, would do such apparent violence to the meaning of the sacred text? What reader of discernment would become a convert to an opinion, which must darken and pervert the most evident sense of scripture, in order to acquire an air of plausibility?—Suppose a person should, in making his last will, express himself in the following stile: I constitute A, B, and C, my joint executors; I give and bequeath to them, whatever remains of my estate, and goods, when my legacies are paid, and my debts cleared. Would it not be a most extravagant and unreasonable pretence, if a captious neighbour should maintain, that C is not vested with an equal power, has not a right to an equal dividend, with A and B? If a gentleman of the long robe should offer to give this for law, would he not forfeit his character either of sagacity or integrity?—If none of these observations will convince Mr Tomkins, that he has misrepresented the tenor and extent of the baptismal engagement, we will, in order to bring the matter, if possible, to an amicable accommodation, accede even to his own assertion. He argues, “That no other service of the Spirit can be meant, but such as is enjoined in the New Testament.”—Agreed; let us join issue on this footing. Let us rest the cause on this bottom. As it is Mr Tomkins’s own motion, I hope, he will acquiesce in the result of such a trial. Now, the New Testament, both virtually and explicitly, requires us to acknowledge the Holy Ghost, to be God and Lord; and what service is payable, according to the prescriptions of the New Testament, to such a Being; this, and no other, I would render myself; this, and no other is rendered by all the churches. I do not so much as attempt to be an advocate for any other worship, to be addressed to the divine Spirit, than what the evangelical scriptures direct us to offer unto that majestic and venerable, that tremendous and amiable name, *The Lord our God*. If therefore the New Testament demands all honour and adoration, as the inviolable due of this most exalted Being, then Mr Tomkins must either flatly deny the divinity of the Holy Ghost, must contradict the express declaration of the inspired

red writers on this head, or else confess, that his notion stands condemned even on his own principles.

What is alledged from 1 Cor. i. 13. this seems to corroborate our sentiments, rather than to support his. St Paul asks, with warmth, and a sort of holy indignation—*τις τῷ ὀνόματι Παυλοῦ βαπτίζεται*; he speaks of it as an absurd and shocking thing. Now, what could render this so odious and monstrous a practice; such as the apostle disclaims and rejects with abhorrence? Nothing, that I can apprehend, but the horrid evil it would imply. The evil of ascribing divine honours to Paul, making Paul an object of worship, and consecrating persons to a creature, who ought to be consecrated only to the Creator, God blessed for ever. So that I must declare, I think this text a strong intimation, that baptism is really a sacred service or divine worship, which it is utterly unallowable for any creature to assume or admit. Therefore, the good apostle renounces it, with a noble kind of detestation; much like the angel, who, when John offered to fall at his feet, and do him homage, cries, *Οὐρα μὴ τῷ Θεῷ προσκυνῆσθαι* *.

The apostolical benediction is another passage usually and deservedly produced, in justification of our practice. Mr Tomkins alledges, "That this is very different from a direct address by way of prayer to the Spirit," (pag. 17.).—It seems to me to be an undoubted prayer, and to have the very same force as if it had been expressed in the more common precatory form; O Lord Jesus Christ, vouchsafe them thy grace; O God of goodness, grant them thy love; O eternal Spirit, accompany them with thy comfortable presence. That this is the purport of the words, is undeniable; and where is the extraordinary difference, whether they be introduced by an *Ego*, or a *Fac*?—I believe, all will allow the form ordained by God (Numb. vi. 24. 25. 26.) for the use of the Jewish priests, was a real prayer. *The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.* If this was an address to the Almighty, the apostolical be-

* Rev. xxii. 9.

nediction is exactly of the same nature. To say, that it was only a kind of wish, and not designed for a devout aspiration to JEHOVAH, must greatly debase and enervate it. Not to hint, that this sacerdotal blessing contained a recognition of three divine persons, which might be obscure in that age, but has been fully illustrated by the apostles. Not to hint the great probability, that St Paul had this very passage in his eye, when he breathed out his benedictive prayer, and purposely intended to explain it in the evangelical sense.—Besides, I would desire to know, whether any minister could, with a safe conscience, use the following benediction? “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the virgin Mary, be with you all. Amen.” Why should a conscientious minister be afraid of using such a form, if it be no prayer? If it be not a virtual ascription of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence to the virgin, and, in consequence of those attributes, a supplicatory address to her?—Still we are encountered with another objection, “If I should say to a friend, May the good angels attend you; shall this be called a praying to the angels?”—Mr Tomkins himself must own, if he will deal fairly, that the case is by no means parallel. The elect angels disavow all divine worship, but does the Holy Ghost do this? The elect angels are ministering spirits, but of the Holy Ghost it is said, *The Lord is that Spirit*. The angels are confessedly created and finite beings, so that it would be absurdity and blasphemy to invoke them; but the Holy Ghost is possessed of the perfections, performs the works, and is called by the incommunicable name of God, so that it is wisdom and piety to pray to him. For which reasons, I make no doubt, but that, whenever the apostles put up such an ejaculation, *η κοινωνη τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν*, they accompanied it with a devout mental address to the uncreated Spirit. Because it would be a piece of irreverence and of folly, barely to wish the mercy, and not apply to that ever-present Being for its accomplishment.

As for the other arguments which Dr Watts advances, in order to vindicate the custom of ascribing praise to the Holy Ghost, viz. “That it may be expedient to practise it
“ frequently

frequently in some churches, where it has been long used, lest great offence should be given."—"That it may be proper to use it some times, on purpose to hold forth the doctrine of the Trinity in times of error, and to take away all suspicion of heresy from the public worship."—These considerations I leave to the Doctor. I have no inclination to try my skill at such weapons, but use to act with regard to them, as David acted in relation to Saul's armour; because, I really think, that they rather lumber than uphold the cause. They are so unwarily used, that they represent the practice, not as a noble essential piece of divine worship, founded on the strongest and most invariable principles, always suitable to our necessities, and always correspondent to the nature of the blessed Spirit; but as an occasional and time-serving expedient; to be used, not constantly, but now and then only; and that, to cover a turn, none of the most important, to avoid not a real deficiency in worship, but only a suspicion of here-

Where-ever I am solicitous to secure the conclusion, I could by no means offer to deduce it from such unsolid and precarious premises.

I have now examined the most considerable objections, urged by Mr Tomkins, against the unanimous practice of Christian congregations, whether they conform or dissent. I shall only beg the continuance of your candour and patience, while I touch upon another particular or two, which farther corroborate our custom, and prove it to be somewhat more than warrantable.

Suppose we produce a command of our Lord Jesus Christ; is this be sufficient to ascertain the practice? Does not our Saviour give this charge to his apostles? *Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest* *. Now I would humbly ask, Who the Lord of this spiritual harvest is? Shall we refer ourselves to scripture for satisfaction? Will Mr Tomkins abide by the determination of scripture? Will he honestly acknowledge, that, if the scripture declares the Holy Ghost to be the Lord of the harvest, we have then a clear commission, a

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* Matth. ix. 38. Luke x. 2.

positive command, to address ourselves by way of prayer to the Holy Ghost?—It is the Holy Ghost who appoints the labourers, that are to be employed in this harvest. *The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them* *. It is the Holy Ghost, who qualifies the workmen, that are to dispatch this momentous business, with wisdom, with knowledge, with utterance, and with all miraculous abilities, 1 Cor. xii. 8. 9. 10. 11. It is the Holy Ghost who makes these labours effectual, and crowns them with ample success, Acts x. 44. 1 Thess. i. 5.—From these scriptures, and their testimonies concerning the blessed Spirit, it seems indisputably plain, that he is Lord of the harvest. Can we have a more forcible motive to pray unto him, than the consideration of his superintending, conducting, and prospering the progress of (that best of blessings) the everlasting gospel? Need we a better warrant to offer our devoutest applications to him, than our Lord's express injunction, viewed in connection with these remarkable texts?

Suppose, I prove farther, that the heavenly beings pay divine worship to the Holy Ghost. Suppose, I shew you angels and archangels in postures of profound adoration at the throne of the eternal Spirit, and glorifying him in strains of the most sublime devotion: Will this be allowed a proper precedent for our practice? Will any one be so bold as to affirm, that he is unfit to receive the worship of mortals on earth, if it appear that he is the object of angelical worship in the heaven of heavens? In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, we meet with one of the grandest representations imaginable. JEHOVAH exhibits himself to the entranced prophet, seated on a lofty and august throne; before him stood the immortal hosts of seraphim; they veiled their faces in token of deepest self-abasement; they lifted up their voices with a rapturous fervour, and uttered this magnificent acclamation, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory*. The trifagium of the seraphic armies seems to intimate, that they addressed their praises to the one JEHOVAH in a Trinity of persons. If you look forward

* Acts xiii. 2. and xx. 28.

to verse 8. you will find another circumstance confirming this remark, for the glorious Majesty speaks of himself, in the plural number, *Who will go for us?* But the proof I chiefly depend on, the proof which is absolutely incontestable. Which none can deny, without supposing themselves better judges of the sense of scripture, than the apostles. This proof is found in Acts xxviii. 25. where St Paul evidently applies the words, spoke by this majestic and divine Being, to the Holy Ghost, *Well spake the Holy Ghost, saying.* And if he attributes the words to this sacred person, who dares separate the honours? Since all must allow, that the person who gives the commission to the prophet; and the person whom the celestial legions adore, is one and the same.—Since therefore the angels address the Holy Ghost with solemn acts of praise; since they bear united testimony, that *the whole earth is full of his glory*; Mr Tomkins should consider, whether he acts a becoming part, in endeavouring to exclude his glory from any Christian congregation by his example, and from every Christian congregation by his writings.

If Mr Tomkins should still think his own opinion sufficient to over-rule all these allegations of scripture, of greater weight than the practice of St Paul to the Thessalonians; more unexceptionable, and fitter to be admitted as our pattern, than the example of the angelic host; I cannot but imagine, that the propriety of our custom is apparent even on the tenour of his own favourite notions. Pag. 12. he quotes that grand and fundamental law of revealed religion, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* He proceeds to consider, who this Lord our God is, whom we are to serve. He then informs us, "It appears from the whole current of scripture, in the New Testament, as well as the Old, that it is he, who, in times past, spake unto the fathers by the prophets." Rightly judged. We make no appeal from this verdict, but acquiesce in it, though it is his own. Only taking along with us St Peter's declaration, *Prophecy came not in old time* (rather, at any time, *unquam*, not *olim*, *ποτε*, not *πάλαν*) *by the will of man, but holy men of God spake,*
as

as they were moved by the Holy Ghost *. Mr Tomkins himself maintains, that the genuine and undoubted object of divine worship, is that infinitely wise and gracious Being, who spake to our fathers by the prophets; and St Peter, in the most express manner possible, asserts, that this infinitely wise and gracious Being, who spake by the prophets, is the Holy Ghost. Can demonstration itself be plainer? Sure then, Mr Tomkins must either retract his position, or disallow the apostle's application of it, or else give us leave to adhere inviolably to our practice, to look upon it as justifiable beyond all reasonable exception, and, what should carry some peculiar weight with our author, justifiable on principles of his own.

May I urge this point a little farther?—I should be glad to know, what is the scriptural meaning of being converted unto the Lord. Is it not, to renounce every lying vanity, to forsake every evil way, and turn to the Lord with all our heart? that we may fear him, love him, put our whole trust in him, and serve him truly all the days of our life. Does not this include some, rather is it not comprehensive of all worship? So that if it is certain from scripture, that sinners are to be converted to the Holy Ghost; then it is equally certain, that sinners are to pay not some only, but all worship, to that blessed Being, who is the centre of their souls, and the source of their happiness. Be pleased to read attentively 2 Cor. iii. 16. 17. and we dare venture to stand by your decision.

Let me add one more consideration, and I have done.—The blessed Spirit is to help our infirmities in prayer, Rom. viii. 26. The Spirit is to subdue our iniquities, and mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 13. The Spirit is to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, Rom. v. 5. The Spirit is to sanctify us wholly, in all our faculties, 1 Thess. v. 23. The Spirit is to transform us into the divine image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The Spirit is to seal us unto the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. and to be the earnest of an incorruptible inheritance, Eph. i. 14. In a word, from the Spirit we are humbly to expect all the fruits of

* 2 Pet. i. 21.

goodness, righteousness, and truth, Eph. v. 9.—Now what a comfortable prospect rises before us, if this Spirit be the all-sufficient, the infinite God, to whom nothing is impossible; who is able to do for us exceedingly abundantly even above all that we can ask or think! But how languid must be our hopes, how scanty our expectations, if he be not the divine Being, but only some finite existence! And, in another state of things, to whom will righteous souls acknowledge themselves inexpressibly indebted, to whom will they return their ardent thanks, and address the most joyful praises, but to the author of all these inestimable blessings? If this then is likely to be the employ and the delight of heaven, should it not be begun on earth?

Upon the whole; since the custom of offering prayer, and addressing praise, to the Holy Ghost, is contrary to no text of scripture, is founded upon his divine nature, and results from the indispensable obligation of creatures to worship the Godhead:—Since it was undeniably the practice of the Christian church, in its purest days, and has been received, by unanimous approbation, for many hundreds of preceding years:—Since it is probable, if we will allow their doctrines and conduct to be consistent, it is certain, if we will prefer the most accurate and unembarrassed interpretation of their epistles, that the apostles used this method of worship:—Since the analogy of the whole scripture justifies it, and the innumerable benefits, which are communicated to us from the blessed Spirit, demand it:—Since angels ascribe glory to his awful majesty, and our Saviour directs us to put up prayers to his almighty goodness:—These, and other considerations, determine me to join, without the least scruple, with full assurance of its propriety, in that ancient noble doxology.—Glory be to the Father, who hath loved us with an everlasting love, —and to the Son, who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood,—and to the Holy Ghost, who applies these blessings of redeeming grace to our corrupt hearts; to this great, eternal, incomprehensible Trinity, be rendered undivided honours, and immortal praise!

Having been so very prolix already, I shall not render myself more tedious by making any apology, but shall only

only add, what no consideration can induce me to omit, that

I am, dear Sir,

your obliged friend, &c.

L E T T E R XVI.

On the imputation of Adam's first sin.

Dear Sir,

Weston-Favell, March, 1745-6.

YOU have set me a task, which I should be glad to execute, if I was able. God forbid, that I should be backward to plead for the interests of that Redeemer on earth, who, I trust, is making perpetual intercession for me in heaven. But my fear is, lest the noble cause should suffer, by the unskilfulness of its defendant. It is for this reason, purely for this reason, I wish to decline accepting the challenge, you seem to give me in your letter. For this once, however, I will enter the lists, and venture to try the strength, not of your arm, but of your arguments.

I do not wonder, that you have objections to make against Christianity. I know some eminent Christians who were formerly warm and zealous in the opposition: yet they have frankly owned, that their minds were then either very inconsiderate, or else immersed in other speculations; and that they had no leisure, or no inclination, to weigh the evidences, and examine the nature of the evangelical doctrine. Since they have applied themselves to consider these points, with a seriousness and attention becoming an inquiry of the last importance; an inquiry, in which their very souls and all their eternal interests were embarked, they are thoroughly convinced that their former sentiments were wrong. They are fully persuaded, that the gospel-institution is of divine extract; that it is a system, noble and sublime, benevolent and gracious, every way suitable to the majesty of God, and admirably calculated for the comfort, the improvement, and the happiness of mankind.

Methinks

Methinks you will reply, and very reasonably, "that all such should be able to account for the change of their opinions."—I dare say they can.—But as you call on me so particularly to vindicate the religious principles, which I have from my infancy embraced; I will now attempt to vindicate them from the various charges, of which they stand arraigned in your letter.

Be pleased then, dear Sir, to observe, that the Christian doctrine teaches, that when God brought man into being, he blessed him with a state perfectly holy and happy. If you read the Bible, the authentic narrative of our fall, as well as the only guide to our recovery, you will find it an avowed truth, That *God made man upright*. If, therefore, man corrupted himself, and (as it is impossible to bring a clean thing out of an unclean) polluted his offspring; where is the harshness, where the injustice of the divine procedure in adjudging him worthy of death? Let God be justified, and let mortals bear the blame.

You think it very odd, that this tragical catastrophe should be occasioned by eating an apple.—So should I too, was there nothing more in the case, than barely eating an apple. But this was a wilful and presumptuous breach of a most positive command, of the only command, which the almighty Lawgiver enjoined. And the smaller the matter of the prohibition, the more inexcusable was the fault of not complying with it. In this act of disobedience was implied, the most perverse discontent in the happiest circumstances imaginable; the most shameful ingratitude for the most inestimable favours. Pride and arrogance, even to an unsufferable degree; implicit blasphemy, making God a liar, and hearkening to the suggestions of the devil, in preference to the solemn declarations of Truth itself. Indeed, this transgression was a complication of iniquities; and, though represented under the extenuating terms of eating an apple, was really the most horrid provocation, that was ever committed.

But that the transgression of Adam should fasten guilt, or transmit corruption to his latest posterity, this, you imagine, is all a chimera.—If then you was created in a perfect state; if you suffered nothing by the original lapse,

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why

why is your heart prone to numberless evils? Why do you tread in the steps of an apostate ancestor? Why do you violate the law of an infinitely pure God, and too often delight in that abominable and accursed thing which he hateth, sin? You are too honest and ingenuous to deny the truth of these expostulations. And if so, you must allow, that your nature was depraved in Adam, or, which seems to be more culpable, that you have corrupted yourself. Then, there is no such great cause to find fault with the supreme Disposer of things, for including you in Adam's trespass, since you yourself do the same things.

Is it consistent you ask with the character of an infinitely good Being, to make this resolve, that he would, on account of this single crime, bring into existence almost innumerable millions of creatures, so spoiled by himself, that they should all deserve eternal damnation?—I answer, this is entirely a misrepresentation of the Christian scheme. It was not in consequence of the original crime, that God determined to bring the human race into being; but, in pursuance of his own eternal purposes, which are always the issue of consummate wisdom, of unbounded benevolence, and will, unless his creatures stubbornly reject the overtures of his love, terminate in their unspeakable felicity.—Neither was the human race spoiled by the Creator, but by themselves.—To suppose, that the author of all excellence should deprave the work of his own hands, is doubtless a shocking thought, and such as we utterly disavow. So far was he from being the sole operator, that he was not so much as accessory in any degree to their misery: but warned them of their danger; charged them to beware; and planted the barrier of his own tremendous threatenings between them and ruin.

You are displeased, that everlasting happiness should never be attainable by any of these creatures, but by those few to whom God gives his effectual free grace.—If the proposition be set in another light, which is really the true method of stating it; if we say, That, though all have forfeited, yet all may recover everlasting happiness, because effectual grace is freely offered to all: what can a man of candour object to such a dispensation? Will he not acknowledge the

the goodness of the divine procedure, and inveigh against the perverseness of mortals; the most unreasonable perverseness of all those, who are too proud to be sensible of their want of grace, or too careless to trouble their heads about it? Will he not be constrained to declare them suicides, and that they are chargeable, if they perish, with their own destruction? If we prescribe a medicine of sovereign efficacy, and the sick is so self-willed as to refuse the recipe, who is to be blamed, in case of a miscarriage, the physician, or the patient?

When therefore you talk of persons being unavoidably damned, you quite misconceive the tenour of our most merciful and benign institution; which offers forgiveness to all, though ever so profligate, through the Saviour's atonement; which makes a tender of grace to all, though ever so abandoned, through the Saviour's mediation. The language, the most compassionate language of which is, *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die?* And because the sinner, enslaved to vice, is unable to shake off the fetters, it farther says, *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find,* grace sufficient for you.

As to the meaning of the term *grace*, I apprehend, it signifies the pardon of obnoxious, and the acceptance of unworthy persons, on account of the expiation and merits of their Redeemer. It imports also a communication of knowledge and strength to ignorant and impotent creatures, that they may discern their Creator's will, and discerning, may be enabled to perform it. And in forming these ideas, I can see nothing stupid; in expecting these blessings, nothing foolish.

But still, perhaps, you think it scarce reconcileable with the wisdom, the justice, the mercy of God, to suffer mankind to fall. That he foresaw it, and could have prevented it, is undeniable. He foresaw it, or else he could not be omniscient: he was able to have prevented it, otherwise he could not be omnipotent.—But what if the eternal Maker knew, that this would give occasion to the most ample and glorious manifestation of those very attributes, which you suspect are eclipsed hereby? Would this conciliate

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your approbation? Would this incline you to acquiesce in the œconomy of the gospel?

Certainly it is a most stupendous discovery of wisdom to find out a method, whereby the seemingly jarring attributes of justice and mercy may be reconciled.—Whereby the sinner may be saved, without any injury to the inviolable holiness of his laws, or any derogation to the honour of his just and righteous government. It was impossible to give such an amazing proof of his infinite kindness for poor mortals, as by delivering his own Son to take their inferior nature, and bear all their guilt. Nor can there be so signal an exertion of justice, as to punish this most excellent person, when he stood in the place of offenders; or of mercy, as to divert the vengeance from their obnoxious to his immaculate and innocent head.

As from the scheme of redemption, the highest glory redounds to the divine Majesty, so the richest consolation is derived from hence to frail creatures. The happiness of men consists in the favour of God. *His love is better than life.* To be graciously regarded by that adorable Being, who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; to be the objects of his complacency, whose smile constitutes heaven, and whose frown is worse than destruction;—this, this is human felicity. And how could God Almighty give us a brighter evidence, a more pregnant proof of his inconceivably tender concern for us, than by surrendering his only Son to condemnation and death for our sake? Transporting thought! Big with a delight, which man could never have known, had not Adam fallen. This obviates an objection, on which you strongly insist, That you and others never consented to make Adam your representative. For if this method of ordering things be productive of a superior felicity, to all that are willing to be happy, then it can be no wrong to the world in general, or to any individual person in particular. No more than it is a wrong to the minor, for his guardians to procure interest for his money, and improve his estate, against the time of his coming to age.

Upon the whole; there is no reason to quarrel with that sovereign will of God, which permitted us to fall in Adam,
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from thence to contract guilt, to derive pollution, and, consequently, to deserve damnation. But rather there is abundant cause to admire, to adore, to bless his holy name, for providing a Redeemer; a Redeemer of unknown dignity, and unutterable perfections; a Redeemer, by whom all the evils of the fall may be more than redressed; a Redeemer, in whom all the awful and amiable attributes of the Deity are most illustriously displayed; a Redeemer, through whom the most wicked, and most unfortunate of our race, may find mercy, and arrive at happiness; a Redeemer, who most compassionately invites all, all that are weary and heavy laden, to come to him, and most assuredly declares, that *whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.*—And is it not strange,—very strange,—hardly credible, sure, that any should reject so great salvation, and chuse death rather than life?

Let me beg of you, Sir, to consider these points with calmness and impartiality. You cannot but be sensible, that many learned, many wise, many excellent persons, most cordially believe them, receive their chief satisfactions from them; and would rather die, than renounce them.—Since it is possible, at least, that they may be in the right; since you do not pretend to be infallible in your judgment; and since you acknowledge a God of unerring wisdom, and everlasting goodness, let me beseech you to implore his guidance in your search, and his direction in your determination. For I am not ashamed to own, or rather I am bold to maintain, that this wisdom cometh from above; this wisdom is the gift of God; and prayer is altogether as necessary to its attainment, as sagacity of mind, or the accomplishments of learning.

L E T T E R XVII.

Advice to an apprentice.

Dear brother,

Dummer, June 27, 1737.

I Find you are at London looking out for a trade, and a master to set yourself to. I hope, you pray earnestly to God to guide you in your choice by his infinite wisdom.

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He only knows what kind of employ will be best for you; in what family or neighbourhood you will have the most helps and encouragements to holiness; where you will be most exposed to temptations, to evil company, and to an early corruption. Therefore, remember what you have learned in the 3d chapter of Proverbs, and now, above all other times, put in practice, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* Beseech the all-wise God to go before you in this weighty undertaking, and to lead you to such a master, and to settle you in such a place, where you may, the most advantageously, work out your salvation. Desire also your honoured mother, and mine, to have a great regard to your soul, and the things that make for its welfare, in putting you out. Let it be inquired, not only whether such a tradesman be a man of substance and credit, but whether he be also a man of religion and godliness? Whether he be a lover of good people? a careful frequenter of the church? Whether his children be well nurtured and educated in the fear of the Lord? Whether family-prayer be daily offered up in his house? Whether he believes that the souls of his servants are committed to his trust, and that he will be answerable for the neglect of them at the judgment-seat? It will be sadly hazardous to venture yourself under the roof of any person, who is not furnished with these principles, or is a stranger to these practices. But, if he be quite contrary to all these, a despiser of God and goodness, wholly devoted to carnal pleasure, and worldly gain; if he not only omit the religious care and oversight of his household, but also set them a wicked and corrupt example;—let nothing induce you to enter into his service. A lewd, drinking, swearing, cheating master, will be sure to disregard the sobriety and purity of your behaviour, and very likely to corrupt it. To have his disorderly carriage daily before your eyes, will be as dangerous as to lodge in a plague-house. Therefore, let no consideration of profit, or advantage, or of any other sort, prevail with you to become apprentice to such a one. If you do, depend on it, you breathe tainted air; and it is much but you catch the deadly infection.—After you are bound to a master, you must be as diligent in doing your duty to him,

him, as you should be of examining into his character before you are bound. As I have given you my advice concerning the latter of these particulars, I fancy you will not take it amiss, if I give you some directions concerning the former. As soon as you are bound, you are at your master's, and not at your own disposal: he has then a right to your hands, your strength, and all that you can do. He becomes a sort of parent to you; and though not a natural, yet a civil, father. You are also obliged, not only by the laws of your country, and the tenour of your indentures, but by the 5th commandment of God, to pay him all due submission and honour. To do this, is a most material part of your duty, as a Christian, as well as your undeniable debt, as an apprentice. It is required of you by God, in holy scripture, and you must not once imagine that you do what is pleasing to him, unless you conscientiously perform it. Now, that you may know what it is that your master will expect from you, and what it is that the Lord has enjoined you, with regard to him, remember, it consists, *first*, In reverence of his person; *secondly*, In obedience to his commands; and, *thirdly*, In faithfulness in his business.

First, In reverence of his person. You must esteem him very highly for his superiority's sake, and the resemblance he bears to God. For God, who made you, and has an uncontrollable power over you, has communicated some of that power to your master; so that you are to look upon him as the representative, in some sort, of the divine Majesty, and invested with some of his authority. Accordingly St Paul says, 1 Tim. vi. 1. You *must count him worthy of all honour; all, i. e.* internal and external, that of the actions and words, as well as that of the heart. It is not enough to maintain a worthy estimation inwardly, but you must let it appear on all occasions outwardly, by behaving yourself very obligingly to him before his face, and by speaking very respectfully of him behind his back. Suppose you should discern failings and infirmities in him, you must by no means divulge them, or make yourself merry with them, much less must you dare to set light by any of his orders. Whatever you have reason to think will
grieve

grieve or displease him, will be prejudicial or offensive to him, that you must cautiously forbear.

Secondly, Obedience to his commands. See how full the apostle speaks to this purpose, Col. iii. 22. *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh.* Observe likewise, from this passage, not only the necessity, but also the compass and latitude of your obedience; how large and extensive it is. It reaches, not barely to a few, but to all and every instance. If you should receive orders that are ever so much against the grain of your own inclination, you must force yourself to comply with them; receive them as you used to do nauseous physic, though they be unpleasant at first, they will do you good, and be comfortable to you afterwards; your own pleasure must always stoop, and give way to your master's. If he sets you a task as is mean and ignoble, and such as (according to the expression of the world) is beneath a gentleman's son, do not scruple it, dear brother, but dispatch it chearfully. Remember who hath said, *Servants, obey your masters in all things.* And, oh! remember that be we as well born and bred as we will, yet he that was higher than the highest of us all, even the most excellent and illustrious person that ever lived, condescended to the lowest and (such as our fine folks would account the) shamefulest offices. The Lord Jesus Christ, though the brightness of his Father's glory, disdained not to wash his disciples feet. Neither be dejected because you are treated in an unworthy manner, or set to do some mean and low office for him, or his family, but rejoice rather in that you are made like unto your Redeemer, and in the happy prospect you will have of becoming great in heaven, by being so little on earth. I am aware this piece of advice is not so unexceptionable as the rest, it may possibly be adjudged the mark of too yielding and sneaking a spirit; but never forget that the things which are most highly esteemed by God, are held in least repute by men. I know, and am sure, that if any apprentice would make such a compliance for the sake of preserving peace, and out of conscience to the command of God, and with an eye to the example of Christ, there is a day coming when he will not repent of it; when it will not be deemed a blot in his character,

rafter, but be an ornament of grace to his head, and more comely than chains about his neck *. Well, you see your obedience must be universal, you must come when he calls you, and go where he bids you, do all that he commands you, and let alone all that he forbids you. This must, moreover, be done, not grudgingly, or of necessity, but readily and gladly : for hear what the scripture saith, *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily* † ; and again, *With good will doing service* ‡ ; so that we must not creep, but be quick and expeditious in our business, howsoever disagreeable. You must not go about it with grumbling words and muttering in your mouth, but with so satisfied an air, as may shew that you are pleased with whatever pleases your master.

Thirdly, In faithfulness in his business. This is the last branch of your duty to your master ; and since Moses has obtained an honourable testimony, on this account, be you also *faithful in all his house* ||. You may find this, as indeed all the qualifications of a good servant, described by St Paul, (Tit. ii. 10.) *Not purloining, says he, but shewing all fidelity*. You are charged not to purloin, *i. e.* not to keep back from your master, nor to put into your own pocket, nor convert to your own use, any of that money, which, in the way of trade, passes through your hands. You were taught from your childhood, to keep your hands from picking and stealing, and I hope you abhor such abominable practices from the bottom of your heart. You must not sell at a cheaper, and buy at a dearer rate, in order to have some valuable consideration made you privily in your own person. These differ from robbing on the highway only in being less open and notorious ; they are flagrant acts of dishonesty, and will cry to Heaven for vengeance. Such tricks and villainous devices do the same thing by craft and treachery, as housebreakers do by force and violence. Therefore, dear brother, renounce, detest, and fly from them as much as from fire, arrows, and death. Besides, you are not only to abstain from such clandestine knavery, but also to shew all good fidelity. What is meant by this, you may un-

* Prov. i. 9. † Col. iii. 23. ‡ Eph. vi. 7.

|| Heb. iii. 5.

derstand, by reading how Joseph conducted himself in Potiphar's service. Your master it is likely will commit the management of some of his affairs to you, and you must endeavour, by a discreet behaviour, and a pious life, to bring the blessing of the Lord upon all that you take in hand. You must lay out your time, and your labour, and give all diligence to answer the trust reposed in you. You must not delay the business which is urgent, nor do your work by halves, nor transfer that to others which is expected you should do yourself. *The slothful man*, says Solomon, *is brother to him that is a great waster*; therefore you must avoid idleness, and carelessness. In a word, you must do nothing knowingly and wilfully that is likely to impoverish your master, but seek by all lawful and laudable means to increase his substance. All this you must observe, not only when he stands by you, and inspects you, but when his back is turned, and you are removed from his view; otherwise your service is nothing but eye-service, such as will prove odious to man, and is already condemned by God. For if you appear to be industrious, and in earnest, before your master, but to loiter and trifle when out of his sight, you will be chargeable with hypocrisy, a sin extremely hateful to Christ, and grievously pernicious to the soul.—But I am afraid I tire you; this one sentence therefore, and I have done. You must carry yourself, throughout the whole course of your apprenticeship so respectfully, so obediently, so faithfully, that at the end of it you may truly say, with Jacob, *With all my power I have served your father*. I had more to write, but will send you (if you care to accept it) the remainder some other time. May God bless you all, and your affectionate brother, &c.

L E T T E R XVIII.

On the riches of God's mercy.

Dear Sister,

I Have taken my pen in hand to write, but what shall be the subject? News I have none; or, if I had, my brother

brother would communicate it, in his conversation.—Let me imitate a royal example. It was once said by a renowned king, *My song shall be of mercy and judgment*; of the same let my letter treat. The former was very lately the topic of some agreeable discourse with a young gentleman.—We observed, how necessary it is, to be firmly persuaded of the infinitely rich mercies of God in Christ Jesus. This will make us delight to think of him, and encourage us to fly to him: Whereas, if we have a jealousy, that he bears us ill will, or designs our ruin, we cannot take pleasure in him, or place our confidence in him. Therefore the condescending God has given us repeated and solemn assurances of his pity, his grace, his tender mercy in Christ Jesus.

Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7 *. He makes it his very name. Intimating, that a man may forget his own name, before the blessed God can cease to be merciful to them that fear him.

Ezek. xxxiii. 7. 11 †. He confirms his divine good will to us by an oath. He swears by his very life, that he desires our happiness, and seeks our salvation.—Here are two immutable things, the name, and the oath of God. Can we have stronger confirmation of his loving kindness?

I think, if it be possible, we have. He has so loved us, saith the scripture.—How hath he loved us? So, as no words, no not of his own all-wise Spirit can express; nothing but the unspeakably precious effects. So as to surrender his own Son, to die that we might live; to be made subject to the law, that we by his obedience might be made righteous; to become a curse that we might inherit the blessing.

* And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the childrens children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

† So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. Say unto them, As I live, saith

bleffing.—Read what the wife of Manoah very juftly alleges, and apply it to the point before us, Judg. xiii. 23 *. for I can no more : I hear the coach coming to carry me out on a vifit.

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XIX.

On the vanity of the present life.

TO his FATHER.

Rev. and Hon. Sir,

Biddeford, Oct. 1. 1742.

YOUR laft, containing the melancholy account of the death of both my aunts, I received. I hope they died in the Lord, and fleep in the bofom of Jefus ; and then, truly, they are the happy perfons, and we the objects of pity. They reft, and have caft anchor in the harbour ; whereas we are ftill beating on the ocean, and toffed in the ftorm.—If we confider things impartially, this world is our grave ; nor do we really live, till we burft the flefhy prifon, and get beyond the vifible fkies.

In the grave is darknefs. It is called the fhadow of death.—And what elfe is this wretched world ? What, but a ftate of gloominefs ; a valley of the thickeft darknefs ? where poor mortals grope in fpiritual ignorance ; and wander up and down, not feeing the things that belong to their peace.

In the grave, and among the tombs, we look for phantoms and apparitions.—And what elfe do we meet with

faith the Lord God, I have no pleafure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live : turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O houfe of Ifrael ?

* But his wife faid unto him, If the Lord were pleafed to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have fhewed us all thefe things, nor would as at this time have told us fuch things as thefe.

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here below? A thousand sorts of happiness present themselves to our wishes, but are unsubstantial and phantastical all. They are a gay delusion, and mock our expectations, as one of those vanishing forms would baulk our embraces.

The grave is the land where all things are forgotten. The ideas of friendship are obliterated, and the dearest relatives are remembered no more.—And is not this too true a description of our present state? Do we not unaccountably forget Jesus Christ, our almighty friend, and everlasting glory, our invaluable heritage? Where is the man that remembers his bleeding Saviour, on his bed; and thinks upon him when he is waking? No; the Redeemer's inconceivable love, and the precious benefits of his passion, are buried in a deep oblivion.—This world then of darkness, apparitions, and forgetfulness, is the grand dormitory. Flesh and blood the tomb of our immortal minds.

Nascentes morimur.

I fear, I tire you, honoured Sir. But because I have no news, that you can apprehend or relish, I allow my pen in these excursions.—This week I was sent for to visit a lady of this parish, in the same disorder, that proved so fatal to my two aunts. She lay, poor gentlewoman, most terribly afflicted, and is now released. It put me in mind of the Psalmist's penitential acknowledgment, which I think is never more applicable than in the case of the small-pox: *When thou, Lord, with rebuke dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment.* I shall rejoice to hear that you and my mother continue well, under all your trouble and fatigue, and remain,

Reverend and honoured Sir,

Your most dutiful son, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XX.

*On the evil of flattery.**April, 1748.*

FY, fy upon you, dear Dr ***.—I had been endeavouring all the day long to fix my admiration on that most exalted, that most amiable Being, who, though possessed of excellencies which the very angels contemplate with rapture and adoration, yet humbled himself to death, the death of the cross, for my friend and me. When your praises, kind indeed, but, alas! perniciously kind, fetched my thoughts from their proper element, and proper object, to grovel on a creature, and that the meanest of creatures, self. I could wish myself, on such occasions, like the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ears, and refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so sweetly. Praise is most enchanting music to the human ear; shall I rather say, most delicious poison to the human taste. From strangers, or complimentary correspondents, we must expect a touch upon this string, a sprinkling of this spice. But among friends, bosom-friends, Christian friends, it must not be so.—You and I, dear Sir, will teach one another's hearts to rise in wonder, and glow with love, at the consideration of that ever-blessed Sovereign, who is higher than the kings of the earth, higher than the potentates of heaven, and yet lay in darkness and the shadow of death; that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life.—Pardon my excursions on this subject.—A letter from my father is enough to cast contempt upon created things. It informs me, that my poor sister is reduced very low; so low, that my father cannot hear her speak. He seems to look upon her life to be in very great danger. May the Father of compassions restore her health; that she may live to the honour of her dying Master, and be a comfort to her afflicted parents!—Glad I am, that my dear friend can relish the writings of that shining and burning light, Mr ***. Our disesteem of such gospel-doctrines,

as he teaches, generally arises from ignorance of ourselves. Therefore I heartily join with the Grecian sage, in saying, *Ex celo descendit vobis salvator.*

I am, affectionately yours, &c.

L E T T E R XXI.

On the excellency of the favour of God.

Weston-Favell, May, 1748.

I Send my dear friend the letter, which, by his instigation, I write. I send it this night, that if he discerns any thing in it very improper, it may be returned by the bearer, and the needful alterations made.—Methinks, it gives a person a tasteful satisfaction to find favour with judicious, and excellent men. What a transport of delight must it create, to meet with the acceptance of the great Judge, the eternal King, the fountain of all perfection? To be admitted into his immediate presence—to be favoured with the brightest manifestations of his divine attributes—to love him with all our souls, and to be infinitely more beloved by him—to be conformed to his glorious, his most amiable image, and so much the more, as ages in an endless succession roll on ages.—This is life—this is blessedness—this is heaven. And this life is in his Son—this blessedness is purchased for us sinners by the obedience of Christ—to this heaven Christ is the way—the door—the passport. O! let us not doubt, but he will make us meet by his Spirit, for the inheritance which he has obtained by his blood.

Ever yours, &c.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R XXII.

*On the nature of worldly prosperity.**Rev. Sir,**Bath, August 27. 1743.*

Sunday last, I happened not to be at the abbey church, in the afternoon. But conversing yesterday with a gentleman who was one of your auditors, I desired to have a summary account of your sermon. And truly he gave me such an account, as both astonished, and grieved me. You dignified worldly prosperity at so extraordinary a rate, and almost cannonized the prosperous man. On the other hand, you vilified the glorious Jesus in so scandalous a manner, and set the incarnate Godhead to one of the most ignoble and abominable offices. This made me encourage my friend to draw his pen, and send you a word of admonition. And when he declined the task, I could not forbear undertaking it myself. For it would be unkind to you, Sir, to perceive you under such grievous mistakes, and not warn you of the error of your ways. Nor would it be less unfaithful to your Master, and my Master, to be informed of such preaching, and suffer it to pass current without any animadversion.

If I misrepresent you in any particular, I am ready to retract. And if I have truth on my side, and you, reverend Sir, have spoken unworthy your sacred office, have dishonoured the divine Redeemer, and perverted his everlasting gospel—I trust, you also will be so ingenuous, as to condemn that offensive sermon to the flames, and such doctrines to silence and darkness. For I assure you, it is from no ill natured spirit of criticism, no moroseness of temper, or fondness for contradiction, but from a sincere concern for the interests of true religion, and the honours of our common Lord, that I take leave to suggest the following hints.

I think you first exhorted people to rejoice, when their circumstances were affluent, and their worldly affairs prosperous; you enforced this palatable advice, by the precepts
of

of scripture; and lest it should not be received with a proper welcome, you further urged it upon your hearers, by the example of our blessed Saviour. In opposition to this strain of teaching, permit me to observe,

1. That worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for a Christian to rejoice.
2. That it is often one of the forest evils that can befall a person.
3. To sketch out the true nature of scriptural prosperity; or discover, what is that solid ground for rejoicing, which the oracles of God recommend.

First, Worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because worldly things are empty and unsatisfactory. That which is lighter than vanity itself, cannot possibly give substantial joy. If we build for contentment upon sublunary things, we rear our edifice upon the sinking sand. You can no more bring satisfaction out of any thing created, than you can carve an image out of the rising smoke, or fill your belly with the east wind. Those that rejoice only (and you, dear Sir, assigned no other cause for rejoicing) because they have abundance of earthly things richly to enjoy, are like some bewildered and benighted traveller, pierced with cold, dripping with wet, that leaps for joy because he finds a glow-worm under the hedge. Alas! this is in no wise able to direct his wandering feet, to light him through the dismal gloom, or to warm his benumbed limbs; no more than it is able to supply the place of the sun, and dart its faint glimmer through the universe. — The pleasures which a superior fortune furnish out, O! how soon do they become stale, and pall upon the appetite! How easily may a thousand accidents snatch them from our embrace, or dash them to pieces in our arms! How certainly must we forsake them in a very little time; and when we have taken a few more pleasant morsels, a few delicious draughts, eat and drink again no more for ever! And what a wretched disproportionate delight is this, for an immortal mind, that is to survive the dissolution of the globe; that is to live un-

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numbered ages, when all that our eyes have seen, is passed away and gone!

Again: Worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because a person may possess this, and have neither faith, nor grace. There is no manner of connection between faith and wealth. The poor frequently receive the gospel, while numbers of the rich reject their own happiness. And *without faith it is impossible to please God*; it is unreasonable and unwarrantable to rejoice. The believer, indeed, has a permission; has a privilege, yea, has a patent, for rejoicing. The Christian has *all joy and peace in believing*. All—you see here is a monopoly, faith has engrossed this precious commodity. None is to be procured, but from her.—And as for grace, talents of gold may be in the coffers, and not one grain of grace in the heart. Those that call whole lordships their own, cannot, perhaps, say, that they have received the Holy Ghost. And while they are destitute of this divine principle, I can call them nothing but wretches. You may add Illustrious, Right Honourable, and Worshipful, if you please; but still they are miserable wretches, unless Christ the hope of glory be formed in their souls. The Holy Ghost, you know, Sir, is called *the Comforter*, because it is his amiable office to administer consolation to his people. He giveth joy, and who can make sadness? But, alas! if he withdraw his benign influences, who or what can create satisfaction? Silver shoes may as well charm away the racking pains of a goutified foot, or golden dust quench the thirst of a parched throat, as any worldly abundance, as all worldly plenty, beget real joy, without the communications of the comforting Spirit.—You forget, Sir, the prayers which you daily offer up in the congregation. In them, you acknowledge, that the world cannot give peace. And if not peace, surely not joy. If not the fruit, surely not the blossom. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* And all are wicked, who are void of faith, and unrenewed by grace. All run counter to the divine declaration, who bid such persons rejoice, though they should have every kind of prosperity that a carnal heart can wish.

Once more: Worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because a man may possess this, and be a child
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of wrath notwithstanding. Providence often scatters temporary things among the tents of his enemies. *They have children at their desire, and leave the rest of their substance for their babes.* These are husks which the swine are permitted to eat. God's dearest servants, those who are heirs of glory, are frequently seen to be without any share of them, while the most abandoned sinners have them to the full. Lazarus has not a house to lay his head in, while the voluptuary dwells in apartments cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Lazarus has not enough to purchase one morsel of meat, must be beholden to charity for the least crumb of provision; while his hard hearted neighbour drinks wine in bowls, and eats the choicest of the flock; is clothed in purple and fine linen, and fareth sumptuously every day.—Who then can rationally rejoice in that, which is no pledge of the divine acceptance? Which carries with it no proof of our reconciliation to that eternal Majesty, whose smile is inconceivable bliss, whose frown is insupportable woe?—A wealthy and successful person, if he be considerate as well as fortunate, must go home from such a sermon arguing in this manner: “The preacher solicits
 “me to rejoice in my worldly goods. But how can I find
 “complacency in such perishing possessions, when, per-
 “haps, I may be an outcast from heaven, and have no
 “place in that kingdom, which endureth for ever? How
 “can I take pleasure in these dainties that replenish my
 “table, when perhaps the heavy wrath of God may fall
 “upon me, while the meat is yet in my mouth? This
 “sumptuous furniture, this glittering equipage, these de-
 “licious treats, how can I take real satisfaction in them,
 “when, for ought I know, a handwriting upon the wall,
 “may be denouncing my doom? If God would lift up the
 “light of his countenance upon me; if I was sweetly as-
 “certained of his good-will; then I could rejoice unfeign-
 “edly. But as for these large revenues, and tides of suc-
 “cess, that are so much extolled by the preacher, they
 “may prove like the rich pastures that fatten the ox for
 “the knife.”

Will you have patience with me, Sir, if I proceed to prove,

Secondly, That worldly prosperity, is so far from being an adequate cause for our rejoicing, that it is frequently one of the forest and most mischievous evils.—This I am sure was the opinion of Archbishop Usher. That most renowned and excellent prelate, in his younger days, had a continued series of prosperity. Health, impaired by no attacks of sickness; credit, sullied by no breath of scandal; and success, interrupted by no disappointment, or disastrous turn. And what emotion did this occasion in that devout and judicious person's mind? Did his heart dance within him for joy? Did he bless himself on this behalf? No.—But he was under sad apprehensions, lest God had forsaken him, and given him over to a reprobate course. He feared, that his heavenly Father, because he spared the rod, hated the child. That not being brought under the discipline of providential correction, he was a bastard, and not a son of the Lord Almighty.—How diametrically opposite was this way of thinking, to your way of preaching! And whether it was not a very sober and just method of thinking, let the following considerations determine.

Worldly prosperity is apt to attach men to earthly things. When success swells their sails, and all proceeds according to their wish, O! how prone are we to disregard Jesus, and everlasting ages! Many are immoderately fond of the world, because they have swam sweetly down the stream of prosperity; who, probably, would have been weaned from its delights, and indifferent to its goods, in case they had toiled upon the craggy cliffs of some intervening adversity. When they walk always upon roses, and meet with no thorns in their paths, the consequence is an acquiescence in their present station, and remissness in seeking the joys of an invisible world. A contentment in the things that are seen, without any aspirations after the things that are not seen, is the most unhappy condition imaginable, and is generally the offspring of worldly prosperity. And when this worldly prosperity is so highly rated in the calculations of the pulpit, what other effect can possibly attend such lectures, but to glue our affections more closely, and rivet them more inseparably, to these trifles of a day?

Again: Worldly prosperity is frequently a mischievous evil,

vil, because it is apt to make men proud. They come in no misfortune like other folk, says the psalmist, and this is the cause that they are so holden with pride. Prosperity is often a luscious poison. It bloats and puffs men up with an over-weaning opinion of themselves. It intoxicates the mind, and makes it drunk with self-conceit. It prompts people to idolize themselves, and condemn others. The intolerable arrogance of the Babylonish monarch, what was it owing to but his vast and uninterrupted successes? He measured his merit by the length of his purse, and challenged a veneration proportionable to the extent of his dominions. This vile, rank weed, thrives in the hot-beds of honour, wealth, and carnal pleasure. Whereas it might never have reared its head, in the colder climate of tribulation, or scantiness of circumstances.

Once more: Worldly prosperity is frequently a pernicious evil, because it renders men carnally secure. It case-hardens the mind against all the threatenings, and makes it deaf to the invitations of heavenly wisdom. It is a stupifying potion, and lulls the soul into a fatal forgetfulness of everlasting things. Those that were lusty and strong, in our Saviour's days, joined with the impious multitude in despising the veiled Divinity. But those who were diseased in their bodies, or disordered in their minds, with eagerness fell prostrate at his sacred feet, and implored his healing hand.—*Periissent, nisi periissent.*—You cannot but have observed various proofs of this remark in the course of your ministry. You must have seen many persons that rejected all your counsel, and would none of your reproof, while they washed their steps in butter, and the rock poured them out rivers of oil. But how teachable were these once refractory worldlings—how willing to hear the consolations of the gospel, when their sensible delights were perished and gone? How desirous to be informed of a happiness in the heavens, which fadeth not; when their carnal pleasures had made themselves wings, and were flown away? In the gaiety of their health, and abundance of their plenty, they were settled upon the lies of supineness. But when the scene was shifted, they cried out with vehemence, *What must we do to be saved?* This I myself have frequently

frequently remarked in the short compass of my experience. Men, who were like an iron sinew in their flourishing condition, have been impressible as melting wax in a reverse of fortune.

We see then, that the prosperity of this world is always dangerous; often pernicious; and too frequently destructive. It yields pleasures that insatiate;—sweets that are impoisoned;—delights that stupify. Infomuch, that a Heathen could say, *Nihil infelicius illo, cui nihil infelix contigit.*

Here it may be asked, Are we to take no comfort in our portion on earth? Must we become gloomy and melancholy, and go mourning all our days?—Far, far from it. Religion allows us, religion enables us, religion requires us to be joyful. Yea, it gives its faithful adherents to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.—But then it is founded on a principle vastly superiour to that which you, Sir, thought fit to single out and display. It springs from a source, and rests on a basis, that has no manner of dependance on worldly circumstances. Which reminds me of another point, I am engaged to clear up, viz.

The true nature of scriptural prosperity.—The scripture is a spiritual scheme. Spiritual goods are what it chiefly recommends, and from spiritual evils it chiefly deters. Christ's words are spirit: tending to make men not carnally minded, but spiritually minded: to render them spiritual in their understandings, their affections, their conduct. Infomuch that one need not scruple to affirm constantly, that the holy scripture never calls that state a state of prosperity, which is not grounded on the favour of God. Nor ever encourages people to rejoice in any thing, till they are—reconciled to God,—interested in Christ,—and renewed by the Holy Ghost; which, I think, constitute the scriptural prosperity; I am sure, are the ground-work of all happiness. —*First*, For reconciliation to God. *His favour is better than life.* Life itself is worthless, and, consequently, all its enjoyments, without this prime fundamental blessing. For this cause the Prince of peace bled to death, that the
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handwriting of guilt might be blotted out; that the wrath of God might be appeased; and that we who were enemies, might be brought near through his blood. This is the door to all good. Enter in by this gate, O ye sons of men, or else you will inevitably miscarry in your search after felicity. If you seek for blifs, and bottom not your expectations on this rock, you are sure to be disappointed of your hope. I can no more have true comfort in any possession, till I have redemption through my Redeemer's passion, than that unfortunate captive could rejoice in the royal banquet that was before him, when a ponderous sword edged and unsheathed, was hanging by a slender thread, and shaking every moment over his head.—An interest in Christ. This is another pillar to support our felicity. Therefore, our blessed Lord directing us in the way to our true good, says, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.* The everlasting kingdom of heaven as the end, and the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, as the way. Till the one is our actual possession, and the other our certain reversion, we may look for real satisfaction, but shall find none. Apply to all the creatures; rife all their charms; taste all their sweets; you will perceive them to be altogether lighter than vanity itself; without an union with Christ, and an establishment in his merits.—Renovation of mind, is another ingredient of the prosperity delineated in scripture. Till the soul be sanctified, it is in a state of grievous disorder: like a body, all whose bones are out of joint. And, oh! what joy can be tasted in such a condition? Till divine grace have the ascendant within us; till the kingdom of God be set up in our hearts; we are in bondage to corruption. Vile affections domineer over us. The devil and our own lusts play the tyrant in our breasts. We are like slaves under a galling yoke, and like lepers under a noisome distemper. Therefore the Psalmist says, *When I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.* Till thy image be reinstamped upon my heart, I never expect to see good. While we are in the bond of iniquity, we must infallibly be in the gall of bitterness.

This is the prosperity celebrated in the scriptures. Of this every believer is a partaker; and you will please to remember,

member, that every exhortation to rejoicing, which we meet with in those inspired books, are addressed to such persons only. They give not the least invitation to any one, no nor the least licence, to rest satisfied, much less to rejoice, till they are brought into such circumstances of reconciliation with Heaven, and renovation of mind. Nor have you, Sir, any warrant to say to yourself, or your people, *Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, because thou hast much goods laid up for many years.* This is the epicure's creed. The lively oracles bear their testimony against such conclusions. They stile all the unregenerate, fools. And to such, worldly abundance is not matter for mirth, but matter of ruin: for *the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* Be they grand as Nebuchadnezzar, in as much affluence as Ahasuerus, honoured as Herod was by the applauding multitude; yet every page of scripture says to them, as Jehu to Joram's messenger, *What hast thou to do with peace?* And, however some smooth-tongued preachers may flatter and cajole them in their pomp; however they may prophesy smooth things, and solicit them to rejoice on such a footing, as the Lord has not made a ground for rejoicing; yet an apostle bespeaks them in very different language, *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl.* The teacher sent from God has other tidings to tell them, *Woe unto you that are rich, that are full, for ye have your consolation, ye shall hunger hereafter.* And, in another world, they may hear this awful admonition sounding in their ears, *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things:* thy good things, those which thou accountedst good, not that really were good, but only appeared so, to thy distempered judgment, and vitiated taste.

Surely, Sir, it must have been perfectly prudent, or rather absolutely necessary, to caution your audience against so fatal a mistake; especially since they consist of the gay, the grand, the pleasurable. A vigilant minister would certainly give them to understand, that wealth and plenty is, by no means, the prosperity which the Spirit of God commends. That joy, without the loving kindness of the Lord, is a mere chimera. That none are entitled to this medicine of life, but those who can lay their hand upon their hearts,

hearts, and say, with a faith unfeigned, My sins are all forgiven, through the atonement of the slaughtered Lamb; my peace is made with the eternal God, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells in me. This is that which justifies, which produces joy. Then, indeed, and not till then, the wise man's advice may be thy practice; *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth both thee and thy works.* Then thou mayst take comfort in thy earthly accommodations, as so many little appendages of thy bliss; not as the essence, which constitutes it; but as the cement, which serves to fill up some little interstices, and render the whole somewhat more compact. And even, in this case, our blessed Master, (who bid his disciples not to rejoice, because the devils were subject unto them, but because their names were written in heaven), would, probably, caution us not to rejoice, because we have all worldly things copiously to enjoy, but because we are pardoned, we are justified, we are sanctified.

Upon the whole. Suppose worldly prosperity was not oftentimes a most mischievous evil, which it undoubtedly is—Suppose it was a substantial ground for Christian rejoicing, which it really is not—Suppose this was the scriptural prosperity, which notion is, I trust, sufficiently disproved—In a word, suppose the whole tenor of your doctrine to be true, whereas it seems to be palpably false: yet what good, in the name of wonder, can you possibly propose by such preachments? You cannot but be sensible, that we are all strongly addicted to inferior things. We are already too fond of worldly goods, too impetuous in our pursuit of sensual gratifications. We want, we extremely want a curb to check our career, and you clap a spur in our sides. You employ your eloquence as a provocative, in a case that cries aloud for restrictives. Alas! Sir, you have no occasion to push the head-long torrent!—But I have done with this point; have nothing more to add upon this head, unless it be to recommend to your serious consideration, that alarming verdict, pronounced by infinite Wisdom, *He that liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth.* Dead to God, dead to grace; a dead Christian, though a living animal. Compare, reverend Sir, this de-

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claration, with the tendency of your doctrine. Then, I assure myself, you will not redden with indignation at these plain remonstrances; but rather, (as I should in your case) turn pale with grief, at your past teachings; and tremble with fear, for the consequences of them.

Thus much for your divinity: now, Sir, if you please for your logic. We have canvassed your doctrine; let us next consider the argument, with which you establish it. This is, if possible, ten thousand times more exceptionable than the tenet itself. For after having told your audience, that the carnal delight, which you so earnestly press to take, is agreeable to the reason of things, is consonant to the designs of providence, you think proper to add, that it is also countenanced by our Saviour's example. Since, at a certain marriage-feast, when the wine fell short, he wrought a miracle, and furnished them with a fresh supply, on purpose, that the mirth might not die. This was your expression. And, surely, a more shocking one never came from a preacher's lips. Was ever so abject and scurvey a reason assigned, for one of the most illustrious actions? Could any debauched libertine, at a drunken club, have derogated more contumeliously from the dignity of our Lord's behaviour? Jesus the mirror of purity, the fountain of wisdom, of whom it is testified, *That he did all things well*—this wise and glorious Being is represented, not by an abandoned sot, but by a minister of the gospel, as exerting his omnipotence to prolong a merry bout. O! that it might not be told in Gath, or published in the streets of Askelon! But,—*fugit irrevocabile verbum*; you cannot revoke the words. The only reparation you can make to the injured Jesus, or the offended Christian, is to give us a sermon of recantation, and antidote the poison that has been propagated.

But, I would hope, it is too gross to spread. That the mirth may not die, is an assertion that must startle every hearer. Why this a common vintner might have prevented, as well as an almighty Being. A few flasks from the tavern would have answered this end. Most ignoble purpose! Unworthy, altogether unworthy so august, divine, and admirable a person.—O! what a handle does this yield to Infidels

fidels for profane banter ! That Jesus should descend from the heaven of heavens, and come into the world, vested with incontroulable power, on so poor, grovelling, and fordid an errand ! That a part of his business, in the state of humanity, should be to guard against the extinction of such idle mirth, as owes its birth to a bottle ! The soldiers that stripped our Lord of his apparel, and mocked his sacred person ; that spit upon his blessed face, buffeted his divine head, and loaded him with all manner of scurrilities and indignities ; did not commit (in my opinion) so flagrant an abuse, as a modern preacher in one of his studied solemn harangues. They took him to be a mere man ; they pronounced him a vile man ; and, therefore, offered him such opprobrious affronts. But you, Sir, acknowledge him to be God ; you know him to be infinitely wise, and yet make him a lacquey to the most errant trifles, a drudge to mens carnal indulgences.—Suppose, both our houses of parliament, after the maturest deliberation, should employ the whole army of the nation, to clear away all obstructions for a butterfly in her flowery range, or to see that a silly kitten goes on unmolested in her sportive gambols ; would you extol the wisdom of our senators ? Would you not cry shame upon their conduct ? Now, your assertion is full as depreciatory to the consummate prudence, and exemplary purity of our divine Master : since you set them both on work, joined with his irresistible might, only to furnish out a little more gaiety, a little more laughter, to a set of carousers, whom you describe as pretty well in for it already.

That the mirth might not die ! that is, that those who were already made merry with liquor, might go on in their jovial delights, till they added drunkenness to their thirst. For when people are thus exhilarated, to take fresh draughts, and pour down more wine, must indeed make them, as a professed scorner profanely expresses himself, on this very occasion, more than half seas over. So that when you give an evasive flourish or two, and would have your hearers to believe, that you are no advocate for intemperance, it is plain, you are only complimenting the cause of sobriety. This interpretation put upon our Lord's conduct, knocks all such sham pretences on the head. For, if he wrought

the miracle with such a view, and for such sort of people, all the world cannot clear him from being a promoter of excess; and if he did not, all the world cannot acquit you, Sir, from the most abusive misrepresentations of your Redeemer.

That the mirth might not die! What could a lewd rake have done at his riotous table, worse than that which you ascribe to the pattern of all perfection? My blood grows chill: my thoughts recoil at so horrid a position. Any gentleman, of tolerable seriousness, when he perceives his friends are got merry with his drink, would rather withdraw the glass, than add fuel to the flame. For my part, I should think myself an abettor of excess, and little better than a pimp for debauchery, if when men are merry in their cups, I should supply them with means of driving on the wanton humour. And yet,—*be amazed, O ye heavens, and be horribly afraid, O earth!*—a minister, in the midst of a thronged congregation, charges this very practice upon the most immaculate Lamb of God!—O! Sir, how could he who came to be our sanctification, administer to our inordinate gratifications? How could he who has enjoined us not to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, be instrumental to continue a luxurious revel?—O blessed Jesus, surely that is fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, *Thou art wounded in the house of thy friends.* Thy character is debased, thy doctrines adulterated, by those who profess themselves adorers of the one, and expounders of the other. O! that ever the Christian pulpit should become a porch to the temple of Bacchus! and a Christian preacher act the part of a purveyor for the tipling-house!

Do you intend to please, Sir, or to profit your audience, by these admonitions?—You can please none but men of corrupt minds, *whose God is their belly, who mind earthly things.* You can profit none but those, whose heaven is to be found in the juice of the grape. They can serve no other end, but to give a sort of sanction to their extravagancies. Your lectures, perhaps, may be recollected with applause on an ale-bench, and pleaded among a circle of jolly toppers. But I assure you, Sir, they are heard by

by the serious and devout, with the utmost sorrow, and with equal detestation. Their ears are wounded, and their hearts bleed, under the sound of such Bacchanalian doctrines.

May I now be permitted to declare my sentiments, with regard to that passage of scripture, which you have so unhappily perverted?

As to the mirth you seem so fond of, there is no mention of it in the sacred narrative. For Christ went not about to spread the laugh among his company, but to make them serious, sober, and wise unto salvation. If he vouchsafed his presence at entertainments, and sat at the tables of sinners, it was with a gracious design of instructing and converting them in their own houses. He came to feasts in the same spirit, and for the same purposes, as he came into the world: to turn poor mankind from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God: so that none can imagine, when he was in the room, that there could be any thing like that licentious diversion, which too generally prevails in our merry meetings. If they did rejoice, they rejoiced, doubtless, after a godly sort. They rejoiced in the precious and instructive words, that dropped from Christ's lips, as sweets from an honey-comb. They rejoiced to have so divine a prophet raised up unto God's people, and to have the honour of so illustrious a personage amongst them. They rejoiced, without all peradventure, to see, and hear, and handle the word of life.

As for that expression, which we translate *well drunk*, —*μεθυσθαι*,—profane wits, I know, raise mighty triumphs upon it: but, in truth, they are Babel-buildings, and proofs of nothing but their own folly. They thereby give us to understand, that their want of sense is as unquestionable, as their malignity to Christianity. For, surely, they must be full as errant ideots, as they are shameless sots, who can offer to fetch the least shadow of a plea for riotous indulgences from this passage. Since, let the meaning of the word be ever so loose and exceptionable, yet nothing can be concluded from thence, against the oeconomy and decorum of that entertainment, because the governor speaks only of the usual custom at other treats. He says not

a word, good or bad, of the guests that were present at that bridal festival. It must therefore be, not only precarious, but ridiculous and absurd, to infer the disorderly proceedings of those people, from what the ruler observes concerning others. I once was acquainted with a worthy gentleman, who frequently invited to his table the young persons of his neighbourhood; and would take a pleasure in instilling or cultivating in their minds the principles of sobriety, industry, and piety. Now, in case he had said, after supper was removed, "I know very well, my honest neighbours, it is customary with some persons of fortune, both to please and pride themselves in making their visitors drunk. They push the glass briskly round, and press one bumper upon another, till they send their guests staggering to bed. But,"—Now, would any one be so stupid, as to infer from this acknowledgment of the practice of others, that this was also the practice of my friend? Yet this they may do, with as much justness and solidity of reasoning, as deduce any maxim in favour of excess from the speech of the Architrachus (or master of the feast).

Evident, I think, it is, that this expression, whatever be its exact import, is in no wise referable to the condition of those guests; so that we allow our adversaries too much advantage, by admitting any of their remarks upon its signification. We should wrest this weapon out of their hands, which they brandish so formidably, rather than guard against its strokes.—But in case it was applicable to them, yet it is most monstrous, to suppose it significant of the least deviation from temperance. For had we not known the company to be of the most exemplary behaviour, and heavenly-minded spirit; had they been a parcel of irreligious and lewd fellows, instead of the virgin mother, and the Redeemer's disciples, yet it would be impossible to conceive, that any thing which had the least approach towards surfeiting and drunkenness should be tolerated, when Jesus himself was in the midst of them. Before so venerable and divine a person, they would not dare to allow themselves in any milbecoming indulgences, or indecencies of carriage. Besides, had their inclinations been ever so abandoned or impetuous, his eternal power and Godhead would

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have restrained them. He that intimidated the sacrilegious rabble, when they profaned the temple, and drove them before his single scourge; he that struck prostrate to the ground, a whole band of armed men, only with his word; he that had all hearts in his hand, and could manage them as he pleased; would, doubtless, have forbid, at this juncture, whatever bordered upon dissoluteness.

Should any one inquire, for what cause then did Christ work this miracle, if not to revive the dying mirth?—I answer, several noble reasons are assignable and obvious.

One; To furnish a supply for fresh guests, which on those occasions were continually pouring in; that the feast might be prolonged to its usual period, and all that came might be moderately refreshed. For I can by no means imagine, that this fresh supply was intended for those, who had cheared themselves already with a sufficient quantity. This indeed is what your sermon takes for granted, or else your application of this fact is frivolous and impertinent. But I promise myself, when you give it a second consideration, you will wonder, how so unworthy a thought could come into your mind; and be sorry, that it should ever proceed from your lips; since it is so entirely repugnant to the whole character, conduct, and preaching of our Lord Jesus.

Another reason might be, to reward the married pair, for their hospitality to himself and his followers. To give early notice to the world, that none should be losers by shewing kindness to him or his. That every piece of respect paid to Jesus, and every kindness exercised towards his family, should meet with a full recompence of reward. Thus did he prepare an extensive fund for those, who had forsaken houses, lands, relations, and their earthly all, for his sake. Prepare a fund for their subsistence, by disposing people to entertain and accommodate them, when they should be sent forth, without staff or scrip, or money in their purses.

Another cause, and that which is remarked by the holy historian, was, *To manifest forth his glory*. To give a most conspicuous display of his Messiahship. He opened, as it were, his commission, and shewed his divine credentials.

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Which was done with perfect propriety, in a public manner, before more spectators than his own attendants. And whatever effect it might have upon others, it confirmed the faith of his disciples. Seeing this incontestable proof of his mission, it is said, *They believed on him*: and were thenceforth inviolably attached to his person and ministry.

Other reasons may be suggested, and those exceeding sound and useful. Such as point out a noble and deep significance in this miracle; make it rich with divine and spiritual meaning: and upon this footing, a more delicious feast for our souls, than wines of the finest flavour, and most generous quality, are to our animal nature.

For instance: It might signify the superior richness of those comforts, which his gospel was introducing into the world. That they exceeded those broached by Moses, and the law, as much as the pure blood of the grape, excels the water of our common wells. That his flesh and blood would be a sovereign source of alacrity and consolation to his people; gladden and revive their hearts, like some exquisite cordial; strengthen and invigorate their minds, like the best bodied wines.

This particular season of a marriage-ceremony, was probably chosen, in order to intimate the necessity of being espoused and united to Christ, before we can be partakers of these evangelical delights. Divorced we must be from our old husband, the law; divorced from the covenant of works; and no longer wedded, by self-opinionativeness, to our own righteousnesses; but married, by the bond of a lively faith, to that everlasting Bridegroom, in order to taste those comforts, and have our share in those joys.

A reason fixed upon by our church is, That Christ would hereby put an honour upon the matrimonial state; by gracing the solemnity with his sacred company, and performing his first public miracle on this occasion. A fine admonition this, to render us more than ordinarily solicitous, to have the favourable concurrence of Jesus, both when we devise, and when we take, so important a step: because the tranquillity and happiness of our subsequent life depends, very much, on this alteration of our condition.—That we should, by all means, marry in the Lord;
and

and implore his spiritual gracious presence at the wedding; which will improve the advantages, and sanctify the enjoyments, of that comfortable state; will, as it is delicately figured out in the metaphor, turn our water into wine.

It might also be intended to remind us, that the comforts, even of animal life, were recovered by the second Adam, as they were forfeited by the first Adam. When our first parents were guilty of rebellion against their Maker, they lost all right to the valuable productions of nature. This, indeed, was their dowry originally settled upon them; but by their disloyalty it became confiscated. Justice seized upon their inheritance, and vengeance said, *Cursed be the ground for your sakes.* Christ, in this exigency, immediately interposed; took off the attainder, and restored to poor Adam, and his posterity, the precious fruits of the earth. These blessings, derived from Christ's mediation, were very properly recognized at a wedding; because, straitway after the marriage of the first couple, they were alienated and sequestered.

This, Sir, is a way of expounding our Redeemer's miracles, well worthy your consideration, if not your imitation. In this light they appear, not barely so many witnesses of his being the Messiah, but so many living mirrors of his mediatorial mercies. In which we discern a most expressive figure of those spiritual good things, which we extremely want, and may fully enjoy through Jesus Christ.—The marvellous things brought to pass by the agency of prophets, apostles, and holy men of old, were indisputable vouchers for their being sent of God. But our Redeemer's works had a farther excellency, and answered a diviner end. They held forth and presented, even to the senses, a most striking pattern of those spiritual blessings, which sinners may enjoy through their Saviour.—Thus, when he cured the man born blind: What did this signify but his healing the blindness of our understandings, and pouring the day of his glorious gospel upon our internal sight?—When he made the poor paralytic strong and vigorous, that was not able to turn himself on his bed, or to use his limbs: What a lively emblem was here, both of our disease, and his sovereign help? Of our disease, whereby

we are utterly impotent to do a good work, or think a good thought : of his sovereign help, whereby we are enabled to do all things, through Christ strengthening us ; enabled to believe through his grace, and to mortify our corruptions through his Spirit.—Was not the filthy leper, a true picture of our loathsomeness, through original defilement, and actual transgressions ? And when our Redeemer disdained not to touch this noisome creature, and make him perfectly clean ; how appositely did this image point out the condescension of his goodness, in undertaking our redemption ; and the efficacy of his blood, in accomplishing our purification ?—I might go through the whole series of our Lord's miracles, and discover in them a most significant and complete portraiture of all manner of spiritual blessings.—But the foregoing instances shall suffice. From these hints, we may discern an adorable depth of design : unsearchable treasures of contrivance, as well as beneficence, in those operations of his mighty power. Which noble peculiarity gives them a vast pre-eminence above all the miracles in Egypt, and the wonders in the field of Zoan. Renders them so many fine representations of the deliverances and privileges enjoyable through our ever blessed Immanuel. In a word, renders them a kind of gospel that addresses itself even to our eyes ; and so most wisely calculated, both to direct our hopes, and strengthen our faith, in the incarnate God.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R — XXIII.

Assurance in the nature of faith.

My very dear friend,

YOur last found me on the recovering hand ; getting strength and spirits, though by slow degrees.

Soon after I received your favour, a messenger came from London, bringing us the alarming news, that my youngest brother was extremely ill. My father's bowels yearned, and his heart bled ; but the infirmities of age, and

and an unwieldy constitution, hindered him from taking the journey. Upon me, therefore, the office fell. Feeble and languid as I was, there was no rejecting such a call. Accordingly, I took coach, and in two days arrived safe at London; where I found my poor brother (the packer) seized with a most violent fever. He was attended by two eminent physicians; but they proved vain helpers, and miserable comforters. For a considerable time, his stout constitution struggled with the disease, but at last was forced to yield, was forced to drop in the dreadful combat. After attending his sick-bed for several days, I had the melancholy task of closing his dear eyes, and resigning him up to death.

Oh! the uncertainty of mortal things! What is health, but a glimmering taper, that expires while it shines; and is liable to be extinguished by every motion of the air? What is strength, but a tender blossom, that is often withered in its fullest bloom; often blasted, even before it is blown?—Who could have thought, that I should survive my brother, and follow him to the grave? I sickly and enervated, he always lively and vigorous. In flourishing circumstances, and blessed with prosperity in his business; but now removed to the dark, inactive, silent tomb. Late-ly married to a beautiful and blooming bride; but now everlastingly divorced, and a companion for creeping things.

Scarce was I returned to Weston, but another awful providence fetched me from home: My very worthy physician, Dr Stonehouse, who lives and practises at Northampton, had the misfortune to lose an amiable and excellent wife. She also was snatched away in the morning of life, (aged 25), and dead, before I so much as heard of her being disordered. At this valuable friend's house, I was desired to abide some time, in order to assist in writing letters for him, and dispatching his necessary affairs; in comforting him concerning the deceased; and (if the will of God be so) in endeavouring to improve the awakening visitation to our mutual good.

You will surely say, when you read this account, that I have been in deaths oft. Once upon the borders of it myself,

self, and more than once a spectator of its victory over others. —However, my dear friends, let us not be dismayed. Let no man's, at least no believer's heart fail, because of this king of terrors. Though thousands fall beside us, though ten thousands expire at our right hand, and though we ourselves must quickly give up the ghost; yet the word is gone out of our great Redeemer's mouth, and it shall not return unfulfilled, *I will swallow up death in victory. He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; he shall say to the grave, Give up; and to the sea, Keep not back; release my sons from your dark confinement, and restore my daughters to their everlasting Father's arms.*—Then, shall we lead him captive, whose captives we were, and triumph eternally over this last enemy. In the mean time, let us lay all our help, all our guilt, upon the divine Author of our faith, and Captain of our salvation. So shall we no longer be in bondage, through fear of death; but with the saints of old, overcome through the blood of the Lamb; overcome the dread, even while we sink beneath the stroke of this our mortal foe.

What I wrote concerning a firm faith in God's most precious promises, and an humble trust, that we are the objects of his tender love, is what I desire to feel, rather than what I actually experience. Considerations they are, with which I would ply my own heart, in hopes that they may be effectually set home by divine grace; in hopes, that they may become the happy means of making me strong in faith, and enabling me thereby to give glory to God.

Your remarks on this important point are exceedingly judicious, and perfectly right. After which, it will be insignificant to my friend, and look like arrogance in his correspondent, to add, that they exactly coincide with my sentiments.

I do not doubt, but there are many dear children of the blessed God, who are in a much better condition, with regard to his favour, than they can easily be persuaded to believe. Many sincerely righteous, for whom light is shewn; many true hearted, for whom joyful gladness is prepared: which, though latent in the furrows of inward tribulation, or oppressed under the clods of misgiving fears, shall, in
another

another world, spring up with infinite increase, and yield an everlasting harvest.

That humble hope, mixed with trembling; you have very pathetically described, in the breathings of a renewed soul, panting after God; languishing for the tokens of his love; ardently desiring the final enjoyment of him in his heavenly kingdom; and relying wholly on the meritorious passion, pleading nothing but the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ—Happy, without all peradventure, happy the heart, in which such affections habitually prevail. They are the beginning of heaven, and will certainly be completed in glory. They constitute a signal part of that meetness for the inheritance of saints in light, concerning which the apostle speaks, and which is one of the surest evidences of our designation to that purchased possession. Christ will in no wise, on no consideration of past provocation, or present corruption, either for weakness of faith, or want of confidence, cast out such a one. Let not such a one question, but he who has begun the good work, will accomplish it even unto the end.

We should, however, as you most pertinently observe, lament all the remains of unbelief, as a misery; repent of them, as a sin; and labour to obtain a more assured faith, both as our duty, and our felicity.—The direction for prayer, you know, is, that we draw near in full assurance of faith; and, Whatsoever things ye ask in prayer, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them—The Thessalonians are commended for receiving the gospel with much assurance of faith. *Receiving the gospel.*—What is meant by that expression? Believing, that the apostles were no impostors; that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah; and that his doctrine came from heaven?—This, and abundantly more. I apprehend, it implies—That Christ died, not for sins only in general, but for their sins in particular; that he bore all their iniquities, in his own bleeding body, and agonizing soul, on the cursed tree; that, all their crimes being fully expiated, the most rigorous justice would not demand a double payment for the same debt; and consequently, that there remained no condemnation for them.—This is the glad tidings, which they not only attended to,

to, and credited with a speculative assent; but with a personal application of it, each to his particular case. And why should not we do the very same?—I shall only subjoin further on this head, what I take to be a very clear and accurate explanation of the apostle's celebrated definition of faith.—*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*; putting us into a kind of present possession of the promises, and setting divine truths before the mind in all the light and power of demonstration. For this beautiful illustration of the inspired writer, I am obliged to an excellent clergyman of this neighbourhood; who lately favoured us with an admirable visitation-sermon, and, for the good of the public, was prevailed on to print it.—You will give me leave to close the topic with a distinction, which I have somewhere read, or on some occasion heard. A distinction, which, I think, properly adjusts the case under consideration; and settles it, neither on a precarious, nor a discouraging issue.—Many have the faith which bringeth salvation, who have not that faith which produceth assurance; but none have the former, who do not aspire after, and endeavour to possess the latter.

On the whole, I heartily beseech the adorable and infinitely gracious Giver of every perfect gift, to stablish, strengthen, settle us in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. That he would fulfil in us all the good-pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. And, I dare say, we shall often lift up our hearts to our heavenly Father, and breathe out that ardent petition, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*.—If we have such frequent recourse to the overflowing and inexhaustible fountain of all good; if we add to our prayers meditation on the merits of Jesus, and on the sure word of promise; our faith will grow; the grain of mustard-seed will be quickened, and shoot up into a tree; the little drop will become a stream, and the stream spread into a river. The waters that issued from the sanctuary were, at first, deep to the ankles only; then they arose to the knees; soon they reached the loins; and were afterwards waters to swim in.

The contemplations you are pleased to inquire after, are, after long delays, or a very slow procedure of the press, launched

launched into the world. What may be their fate, I dare not conjecture. Whether, by the general disapprobation, they may be unfortunately becalmed; or, by the severity of critics, may split on the rocks of censure; or, foundering through their own unworthiness, may sink in oblivion; or, blessed by a gracious providence, may gain the haven of public acceptance, and import those most valuable commodities, pleasure, which improves, and improvement, which delights. When they reach your parts, be so good, dear, Sir, as to peruse them, first with the humble child-like spirit of a Christian, who seeks religious advantage in all that he reads. Next, with the candid rigour of a friend, saying, as you proceed, Here his thoughts are redundant, and want the pruning-knife; there they are deficient, and call for the grafter's hand; here the language is obscure, and perspicuity is the only remedy; there it is inexpressive, and must be rendered more nervous, in order to reach the judgment, or strike the passions.—Above all, let me beg of you to implore a blessing from the most high God, both upon the author and his piece; that the one may be a monument of divine mercy, the other a polished shaft in the great Immanuel's quiver.

Should not a sense of his love make us more ardently desirous of bringing others to partake of that everlasting bliss, which we humbly expect as our final portion; and of which some foretastes have been indulged, even in our present state? Should we not be stirred up, with greater assiduity and love, to warn every man, and exhort every man, that they also may be presented perfect in Christ, and live for ever in the light of his countenance?—The book I mentioned formerly, and took leave to recommend, shall be sent. I have set it apart as a present for my dear friend; and whether my life be prolonged, or my death hastened, neither of these circumstances shall make any alteration in my design. Only let me desire you, in your next, to give me once more the proper directions for conveying it to you. For, some way or other, in my late unsettled state, I have mislaid your letter.—Please to present my thanks to Mrs *** for her kind wishes, and tell her, that they are, and shall

shall be most cordially returned by her and your most faithful and affectionate friend, &c.

L E T T E R XXIV.

On going to a meeting of the clergy.

Reverend and dear Sir,

June 2. 1741.

CAN you accept the will for the deed? It was in my heart, long before this, to have made you my best acknowledgments. And not in my heart only, but actually attempted. In Buckinghamshire I remembered my kind and obliging friend, and was with delight set down to give vent to my grateful thoughts. But company on a sudden coming in, arrested my pen; and engaging me till I returned from that place, prevented the execution of my design. Now, Sir, my heartiest thanks for your welcome assistance, desire your acceptance. And if the utmost sincerity can atone for the delay, my conscious heart assures me, they will not be rejected.—My father is wonderfully recovered. Had he lived in the times of superstition, for ought I know, his uncommon disorder might have been ascribed to witchcraft, and his speedy recovery passed current for a miracle. The grave seemed to have opened her mouth for him. We thought him to be on the very brink of death.

*Quam pœne furvæ regna Proserpinæ,
Et judicantem viderit Æacum,
Sedesque descriptas Piorum!*

But now God has turned, and refreshed him; yea, and brought him from the deep of the earth again. He lives and regains his strength daily. Last Sunday he read prayers in his church, and intends next Sunday to fill the pulpit.

Mrs ***, I hope, is very well; to whom I beg my humble service may be acceptable. Your dear little ones too, the olive-plants about your table, I trust are in a flourishing state. May the good Lord fulfil his precious promise

to them, and the children of your honoured neighbour. May he pour his Spirit upon your seed, and his blessing upon your offspring, that they may grow up (in knowledge and grace) as willows by the water courses.—I am just now going to our visitation, held at Northampton. I shall appear as a stranger in our Jerusalem; knowing few, and known by fewer. Methinks, there is something august and venerable in a meeting of the clergy; especially, if one looks upon them as so many agents for the invisible God, and envoys from the court of heaven. I hope to be put in mind of that awful day, when the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, and Bishop of souls, will make his entrance in the clouds of heaven. Then, at that great, final, and decisive entrance, may my dear friend receive the approbation of his Judge. May he then be rewarded for his kind offices to myself and others, in everlasting honour and joy.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXV.

The Christian's duty and triumph.

Dearest Mr **,

Weston-Favell, Aug. 8. 1747.

I Ought to take shame to myself, for suffering so kind a letter, received from so valuable a friend, to remain so long unanswered. Upon no other consideration, than that of my enfeebled and languishing constitution, can I excuse myself, or hope for your pardon. My health is continually upon the decline, and the springs of life are all relaxing. Mine age is departing, and removing from me as a shepherd's tent. Medicine is baffled; and my physician, Dr Stonhouse, who is a dear friend to his patient, and a lover of the Lord Jesus, pities, but cannot succour me. This blessing, however, together with a multitude of others, the divine goodness vouchsafes, to gild the gloom of decaying nature; that I am racked with no pain, and enjoy the free undisturbed exercise of my understanding.

I am much obliged to you for carrying my message to
X the

the abbey with so much speed, and conveying to me, with equal dispatch, a satisfactory answer. When you visit the worthy family again, be pleased, after presenting my affectionate compliments, and most cordial good wishes, to inform Mrs ***, that the piece is sent to the press, and after some corrections made in the dedication, addressed to my godson. It is my humble request to him, and my earnest prayer to God, that he may regard it, not merely as a complimentary form, but as the serious and pathetic advice, of his father's intimate acquaintance, and his soul's sincere friend. Who, in all probability, will be cut off from every other opportunity of fulfilling his sacred engagements, and admonishing him of whatever a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health.

I forgot, whether I told you, that the last work will be divided into two parts; will be full as large as the two first letters; and therefore the whole will be disposed into two small pocket volumes, on a very neat paper, with an elegant type, in *duodecimo*. But a convenient number of the new essays will be printed in the octavo size and character, for the satisfaction of those who purchased the former edition, and may possibly be willing to complete their book.—It was a considerable time, before I could think of a title for the last pieces, that suited their nature, and expressed their design. At length, I have determined to stile them, *Contemplations on the night*, and *Contemplations on the starry heavens*.

Now I apprehend myself to be near the close of life, and stand, as it were, on the brink of the grave, with eternity full in my view, perhaps my dear friend would be willing to know my sentiments of things in this awful situation. At such a juncture, the mind is most unprejudiced, and the judgment not so liable to be dazzled by the glitter of worldly objects.

I think then, dear Sir, that we are extremely mistaken, and sustain a mighty loss in our most important interests, by reading so much, and praying so little. Was I to enjoy Hezekiah's grant, and have fifteen years added to my life, I would be much more frequent in my applications to the throne of grace. I have read of a person, who was
often

often retired and on his knees, was remarkable for his frequency and fervency in devotion; being asked the reason of this so singular a behaviour, he replied, Because I am sensible I must die. I assure you, dear Mr ***, I feel the weight of this answer, I see the wisdom of this procedure; and, was my span to be lengthened, would endeavour always to remember the one, and daily to imitate the other.

I think also, we fail in our duty, and thwart our comfort, by studying God's holy word no more. I have, for my part, been too fond of reading every thing elegant and valuable, that has been penned in our own language; and been particularly charmed with the historians, orators, and poets of antiquity. But was I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished trifles. I would resign the delights of modern wit, amusement, and eloquence, and devote my attention to the scriptures of truth. I would sit, with much greater assiduity, at my divine Master's feet, and desire *to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. This wisdom, whose fruits are peace in life, consolation in death, and everlasting salvation after death; this I would trace, this I would seek, this I would explore, through the spacious and delightful fields of the Old and New Testament. In short, I would adopt the apostle's resolution, and *give myself* * (*ὑποτάσσω*) *to prayer, and to the word*.

With regard to my public ministry, my chief aim should be, to beget in my people's minds a deep sense of their depraved, guilty, undone condition; and a clear believing conviction of the all-sufficiency of Christ, by his blood, his righteousness, his intercession, and his Spirit, to save them to the uttermost. I would always observe, to labour for them in my closet, as well as in the pulpit; and wrestle in secret supplication, as well as to exert myself in public preaching, for their spiritual and eternal welfare. For unless God take this work into his own hand, what mortal is sufficient for these things?

Now, perhaps, if you sat at my right hand, you would ask, What is my hope with regard to my future and im-

* Acts vi. 4.

mortal state? Truly, my hope, my whole hope, is even in the Lord Redeemer. Should the king of terrors threaten, I fly to the wounds of the slaughtered Lamb, as the trembling dove to the clefts of the rock. Should Satan accuse, I plead the Surety of the covenant, who took my guilt upon himself, and bore my sins in his own body on the tree. Should the law denounce a curse, I appeal to him who hung on the accursed tree, on purpose that all the nations of the earth might be blessed. Should hell open its jaws, and demand its prey, I look up to that gracious Being, who says, *Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.* Should it be said, *No unclean thing can enter into heaven;* my answer is, *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; though my sins be as scarlet, through this blood they shall be as white as snow.* Should it be added, *None can sit down at the supper of the Lamb, without a wedding-garment;* and your righteousnesses, what are they before the pure law, and piercing eye of God, but filthy rags? These I renounce and seek to be found in Christ Jesus, who is the Lord my righteousness. It is written in the word that is to judge the world at the last day, *By his obedience shall many be made righteous*

So that Jesus, the dear and adorable Jesus, is all my trust. His merits are my staff, when I pass through the valley of the shadow of death. His merits are my anchor, when I launch into the boundless ocean of eternity. His merits are the only riches which my poor soul, when stript of its body, desires to carry into the invisible world. If the God of glory pleases to take notice of any mean endeavours to honour his holy name, it will be infinite condescension and grace; but his Son, his righteous and suffering Son, is all my hope, and all my salvation. Dear Sir, pray for me, that the weaker I grow in body, the stronger I may become in this precious faith. May the choicest blessings attend you and yours; a letter would revive

Yours, &c.

P. S. " Though the days are come upon me, in which
 " I have reason to say of worldly things, I have no plea-
 " sure

“ sure in them ; yet I find a secret satisfaction in this con-
“ sideration, that to you, my dear friend, and to others of
“ my candid acquaintance, I may be permitted, even when
“ dead, to speak in my little treatises ; may they, when
“ the author is gone hence, never to be seen in these re-
“ gions below, Oh ! may they testify with some small
“ degree of efficacy, concerning Jesus, that just One ; may
“ they fan the flame of love to his person, and strengthen
“ the principle of faith in his merits !—Once more, dear
“ Sir, adieu.”

L E T T E R XXVI.

On the comfort and ground of assurance of salvation.

My very dear friend, Weston Favell, Aug. 18. 1748.

I Received your letter, full of tenderness, and full of piety,
I last night. The very first thing I apply myself to, this
morning, is to acknowledge your favour, and confess my
own negligence.—But your affectionate heart will pity, ra-
ther than blame me, when I inform you, that a relapse in-
to the disorder, of which I was never thoroughly cured,
has brought me very low. Insomuch, that I am unable,
either to discharge the duties of life, or to answer the de-
mands of friendship. I have not been capable of preaching,
for several Sundays. Pyrmont water, asses milk, and such
kind of restoratives, I try, but try in vain.—A great while
ago, I had begun a very long letter to my ever esteemed
Mr ***. In this I proposed candidly to represent the rea-
sons of my belief, with regard to the final perseverance
of the true believer. But weakness of spirits, and its ne-
ver-failing concomitant, imbecility of thought, obliged me
to desist. In the new edition of my *Meditations*, a note is
added on this subject, declaring, That I am far from main-
taining it, as essential to Christianity, or necessary to sal-
vation, &c.—Where I say, that, Infidels are we in fact ;
My meaning is, that we are all, in some measure, charge-
able with practical infidelity ; as we are all in some degree
carnal, in some degree sinful, while we continue in this
mortal

mortal body. Considering the infinite veracity, and unchangeable faithfulness of the blessed God, the most exalted saints have too much cause to lament their deficiency in point of faith, and evermore to cry out, *Lord, help our unbelief!*

An humble, well-grounded assurance of our reconciliation to God, is an unspeakably precious blessing. It is what all should seek, and many have attained. A gentleman told me, a few days ago, that though he was often solicited to sin, often defiled with corruption, yet he had no manner of doubt concerning his everlasting salvation, for these twenty years. On trying occasions, that seemed to endanger his final happiness, he fled, I presume, to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. He viewed by faith, the infinite, (O! transporting truth!) the infinite satisfaction, made by the bleeding Immanuel; and could not but confide, that a divine expiation was more powerful to save, than all past sins or present infirmities to destroy. This is the white stone, of which Job was happily possessed; *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; and this sweet confidence supported him under all his tribulations. This is that earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, of which St Paul makes mention, and with which he was endued: *We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* And, in the full assurance of this blessed hope, may you, my dear friend, be every day more and more established, strengthened, settled!

If, at any time, I am favoured with this heavenly gift, it is derived from such comfortable scriptures: the Son of the Most High *came into the world, to save sinners: he died, the just for the unjust: he poured out his soul for transgressors.* And since you and I know ourselves to be sinners, unjust, transgressors, why should we not take to ourselves the comfort here offered for our acceptance? Why should we not make use of the privilege here consigned over to our enjoyment, and claim the legacy, in these clauses of our dying Master's testament, most evidently bequeathed to our souls? To found our expectations on this bottom, will be a means both of humbling and exalting

ing us; of filling us with shame, and filling us with hope; that we may abhor ourselves, and yet rejoice in God our Saviour.—Many build their hopes upon their religious duties, and righteous deeds; such a building must unavoidably be shaken by every temptation, and sapped by every working of corruption. These are, in no wise, the foundation, but evidences rather that we are fixed on it. For my part, when I can exercise a grace, or perform a duty, that is debased by no imperfection, mingled with no corruption, then I will trust on self-righteousness. But till then, I must be very unreasonable, if I do not rely on my illustrious Surety; fly to the ark of his wounds, and make mention of his righteousness only. This is all-sufficient; and never, never faileth those that trust in it.

You are not ignorant of my sentiments, with regard to our dissenting brethren. Are we not all devoted to the same supreme Lord? Do we not all rely on the merits of the same glorious Redeemer? By professing the same faith, the same doctrine which is according to godliness, we are incorporated into the same mystical body. And how strange, how unnatural would it be, if the head should be averse to the breast, or the hands inveterately prejudiced against the feet, only because the one is habited somewhat differently from the others? Though I am steady in my attachment to the established church, I would have a right-hand of fellowship, and a heart of love, ever ready, ever open, for all the upright evangelical dissenters.—I thank you for the news you sent, it is impossible for me to pay you in kind.—Make my most respectful compliments acceptable to worthy Mr ***; I had agreed to wait upon him, when I was in town, but my brother's illness growing worse, and soon proving fatal, deprived me of this pleasure, and sent me home to attend his corpse with sorrow to the grave.—I hope, you will be pleased with archbishop Leighton's works; and I heartily pray, that they may be abundantly blessed to both our souls.—I sincerely commiserate poor Miss D***'s case. Despair is indeed a fiery dart of the devil; but blessed be sovereign goodness, there is a remedy against this malady. The Israelites, though wound-
ed

ed by the deadly serpents, looked to the brazen type hung upon the pole, and found a certain cure. And though we are stung by a sense of guilt, and almost perishing in extreme despondency; yet let us turn our eye to him, who was lifted up on the cross, and we shall be whole. He, who was gashed with wounds, and covered with blood; was pierced with irons, and stabbed to the heart; he is our medicine, our recovery, our life. *By his stripes we are healed.* O! let us *look unto him*,—from the depths of distress, as well as from the ends of the earth, *look unto him, and be saved.*—My paper admonishes me to have done: but I cannot conclude, without assuring you, that I love you most affectionately;—so long as life and understanding last, shall pray for you among my choicest friends;—and hope, when this transitory scene of things is at an end, to be, in bonds of nobler friendship, and tenderer endearment.

Ever, ever yours, &c.

L E T T E R XXVII.

Encouragement to one in affliction.

Weston-Favell, July 29. 1749.

THanks to my dear friend, for his welcome letter: it imparted joy to my heart; and having communicated pleasure to our family, is gone (part of it I mean) to make glad your children and your friends at Northampton.—I must confess, I never was so much disheartened at your disorder, as many others were, even though the physicians themselves had given you over; and though I have been often accosted by some of your cordial well wishers, with such saddening addresses: “I am sorry, Sir, to hear that Dr S—— is gone to Bristol, without any likelihood of “returning alive.” I really believe, that God has some signal work for you to do. He that has snatched the brand from the fire, and made it a polished shaft in his quiver, will not, I persuade myself, so soon cast it away, or break it to pieces. I have a strong presage, that almighty goodness will

will continue you, as an instrument to glorify his Son Jesus Christ, and to turn many to righteousness, years and years after I am gone hence, and seen no more.—And I bless, together with you, his holy name, for confirming so far my apprehensions, as to begin the work of your recovery from so deplorable an illness. May he do in this case, as he will in the more important affair of our eternal salvation, thoroughly accomplish what he has graciously begun!

Your family is in prosperity: your olive-plants thrive, and are glossy with health. I asked Sally, where her papa was, and how he did? And her pretty little lips lipst, Very bad, and gone to Bristol. Think, my friend, when you remember those sweet and engaging children,—think on that delightful promise in scripture; *Can a mother forget her sucking child? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee*, Is. xlix. 15.

From my heart I pity your sufferings: but if I pity your distress, with what infinitely more tender compassion are you regarded by your heavenly Father! By him, who said in the multitude of his mercies,—“My Son shall bleed, that you may be healed. My only Son shall die, that you may live for evermore.” May this blood, thus shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.—I hope, you will be enabled to cast your burden upon the Lord, and resign yourself wholly to his wise disposal; and doubtless, you will experience to your comfort, that he has the bowels of a Father to commiserate, and the arm of omnipotence to succour.

A passage in the epistle to the Colossians, which I read this very day, (*viz.* chap. i. vers. 11.), is extremely pertinent to your case, and what I shall frequently pray, may be fulfilled to your great consolation.—That you may be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and long-suffering, with joyfulness.—If you should live to give me an hour's conversation, this verse, and the preceding, would furnish us with a most pleasing and improving subject of discourse. The conciseness, the propriety, the energy of the inspired supplications, is admirable,

mirable. But I must wave such remarks, lest I send you a preachment, instead of an epistle.

I heard you condemned the other day, in a large company, and indeed treated with a malignant severity, about an affair, in which, to my certain knowledge, you had acted with great generosity. I explained, to the confusion of the relator, all those circumstances, which he had so grossly misrepresented; and then I quoted the remark of Mr Richardson, in his *Clarissa*, viz. "That difficult situations" (like yours) make seeming occasions of censure unavoidable: and that, where the reputation of another (especially of a man of character) is concerned, we should never be in haste to censure, or to judge peremptorily on "first surmises." *Audi alteram partem*, is always my rule. It is our duty to use circumspection; and to be upon our guard to cut off occasion from those, who seek occasion to misrepresent and injure us: after this precaution, we should not be too solicitous about the clamours of the malevolent, and the unthinking. May the God of wisdom give us that prudence, which is profitable to direct! And then,

Conscia mens recti famæ mendacia ridet.

This was the Heathens cure for the wounds of defamation; this their armour against those keenest of arrows, bitter words. But see in this, as well as in every other instance, the noble superiority of the Christian scheme! Being *defamed*, we *bless*, says the apostle. *Pray for them that despitefully use you*, says his divine Master. This not only baffles, but more than triumphs over the efforts of malice; and brings an increase of virtue, consequently of happiness, even from the poison of malignity, and the gall of misery.

The bishop has been at Northampton, and his charge turned upon the study of the scriptures; which he affectionately recommended, and forcibly urged. There was something omitted, which I could not but wish had been represented, and enforced. However, in the main, it was excellent, and what I should rejoice to have reduced to universal practice. Our dear friend, Mr *** spied the defect I hint at; and when his mealy-mouthed companion would

not

not indeed have concealed it, but rather have enlarged upon what was valuable,—“Truly,” says he, “I do not see, why we should not speak boldly; and bear our testimony, though it make the ears of the hearers to tingle.” He is cut out for a champion in the cause of our blessed Lord; very sensible, and much of the gentleman; bold too as a lion, he breathes defiance against the world and hell. Confiding in his almighty Master, he fears neither the scourge of the tongue, nor the pomp of power.

Please to present my affectionate compliments to Mr C*** and to Mr G***. I need not solicit a place in their or your daily intercessions, because I am persuaded neither of you can withhold so needful a piece of charity. Accept my best wishes, to which I join my earnest prayers, for your health, your comfort, and happiness, and believe me, as I am, my dear doctor,

Your truly affectionate friend, &c.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

The duty and encouragement of a gospel-minister.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 30. 1749.

WE have seen marvellous things to day, said the people of old; and I may truly say, I have read marvellous tidings this evening. What! is ** become a serious and zealous preacher? He that so often filled the scorner's chair, is he transformed into a strenuous advocate for the gospel, and a devoted champion of Christ? Never, surely, was the prophet's exclamation more seasonable, *Grace! grace!* Zech. iv. 7. How sovereign its power! how superabundant its riches!

I heartily congratulate you, my dear friend, my very dear brother I must call you now, on this change. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, that he *bath counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry.*—I think the hand of Providence, in conducting this affair, is very visible, and much to be regarded. Which must give you no small satisfaction,

tion, and tend to work, not the *spirit of fear, but of love, and of faith, and of a sound mind.*

How honourable is your new office! To be an envoy from the King of heaven!—How delightful your province! To be continually conversant in the glorious truths of the gospel, and the unsearchable riches of Christ!—How truly gainful your business! To win souls: this is indeed—*κτῆμα ἐς αἰῶνα*—an everlasting possession.—And how illustrious the reward, promised to your faithful service! When the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall *receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.*

May we clearly discern, and never forget, what a Master we serve!—So glorious, that all the angels of light adore him:—So gracious, that he spilt his blood, even for his enemies:—So mighty, that he has all power in heaven and on earth:—So faithful, that heaven and earth may pass away, much sooner than one jot or tittle of his word fail. And what is his word, what his engagement to his ministers? **LO I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.** I write it in capitals, because I wish it may be written in our hearts.—Go forth, my dear friend, in the strength of this word; and, verily, you shall not be confounded. Plead with your great Lord, plead for the accomplishment of this word, and the gospel shall prosper in your hand. In every exercise of your ministerial duty, act an humble faith on this wonderful word, and the heart of stone shall feel, the powers of hell fall.—Would to God I had health and strength, I would earnestly pray for grace, that I might join, vigorously join, in this good warfare. But you know, I am like a bleeding, disabled soldier, and only not slain. I hope, however, I shall rejoice to see my comrades routing the foe, and reaping their laurels. Rejoice to see them go on, conquering and to conquer; though no longer able to share, either in the toils or the triumphs of the day.

I believe, it will be no very easy matter to procure a curate, such as you will like; at least, no such offers to my observation.—I heartily wish your valuable friend Mr ***, that faith in the all-atoning blood of the Lamb, and that comfort in the communications of his Spirit, which
may

may sweetly outbalance the weight of any sorrow, and enable him to rejoice in tribulation!

Remember, now you are a minister of God, that your tongue is to be a well of life: you are to believe in Christ, daily to cherish your faith in Jesus, that out of your heart may flow rivers of living waters. Such tides of heavenly and healing truths, as may refresh the fainting soul, and animate its feeble graces.

Please to present my affectionate compliments to Mr C —, and Mr S —; engage their prayers to the Father of compassions in my behalf; and when you yourself draw near to the throne, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, fail not to remember,

Dear Sir,

Your's sincerely,

Your's unalterably, &c.

L E T T E R XXIX.

On hospitality.

My dear friend,

Weston-Favell, Sat. evening.

THIS morning I received your parcel, with a ticket full of the affection of your heart, and sprightliness of your temper — My health languishes, but it is a singular mercy that it is not tortured away by racking pains. — I would do any thing to repair my constitution, and prolong my life; that, if it should please the divine Providence to renew my strength, I might devote it wholly to his service, and be less unprofitable in my generation. But from what I feel, and yet cannot describe, I have no expectation of this kind.

I am highly delighted with Witsius, *De œconomia fœderum*, he is an author exactly suited to my taste; so perspicuous, so elegant, so orthodox. — I wish such a treasure had fallen into my hands, when I studied at the university.

I like Mr ***'s spirit, only wish it was a little more evangelical. Let us so act our parts, as, &c. Might not
Tully

Tully have said the same? Has not Seneca said as much? Why should not Christ Jesus be the foundation of our hopes? Is it less rational, less comfortable, to say with St Paul, *He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

I heartily pity our Staffordshire friend.—Chear him, speak comfortably to him, let not the consideration of his circumstances increase the depression of his spirits. We will never abandon him, nor suffer him to want, so long as we have any thing ourselves.—I said, we will not abandon:—But how poor and cold the consolation, arising from this succour! What are we? Impotence, misery, sin! I believe he loves the Lord Jesus, flies for refuge to the hope set before him *, in the everlasting righteousness, and perfect atonement of Christ. He may, therefore, boldly say, and apply to himself those glorious promises; *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me* †. Present my tender and affectionate compliments to him.

I am glad you have invited to your house that eminent friend of God—and dear friend of yours, the Rev. Mr ***; (for such I know he is): in so doing, you certainly act the *θεοφιλες*, and I cannot but think the *το πλεον*, even in the judgment of the world.—Thus doing, you are in the fashion; for it is a reigning maxim at court, (the court of the blessed and only Potentate the King of kings. and Lord of lords), *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers*.—And can there be a more worthy stranger? Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.—You know who it is that says of his faithful ministers, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*. Gracious and adored Redeemer! shall we not receive thee into our houses, who, for our sakes, hadst not where to lay thy blessed head! wast an exile in Egypt, a prisoner at the bar; a corpse in the grave!—Pray for me, dear friend, that I may bow my poor head in dutiful resignation to the divine will; that I may bless the hand, and kiss the rod that chastises; and love the Lord who

* Heb. vi. 18.

† Chap. xiii. 5. 6.

takes away the strength of my body, but has given me the blood of his Son. I beseech Mr *** to unite his supplication with yours; for I am fearful, lest I should disgrace the gospel in my languishing moments.

Upon a repeated review of the hints you have wrote to promote the cause of religion, I do not see how to improve them; only exercise your talent, stir up the gift of God by a zealous use, and you yourself will be the best improver of such hints. O! let us work while the day lasts; the Judge is at the door, and eternity at hand. May we watch and pray always, that we may be found worthy to stand before the Son of man at his coming.

I am ever,

and most affectionately yours, &c.

L E T T E R X X X .

A method for catechising.

My dear friend,

I Received your letter; am sorry to hear you have been ill; heartily wish you a re-establishment of your health; and shall be glad, when it suits your inclination and conveniency, to see you at Weston.

I am glad you are beginning to catechise your children. I hope you will be enabled to feed Christ's lambs, and dispense to them the milk of the word, as they may be able to bear it.—Indeed you apply to a wrong person for advice. I make some efforts, it is true, to discharge this duty, but not to my own satisfaction; and great will be the glory of divine grace, if it is to the edification of my people.—My time for catechising is during the summer; when the days are long, and the weather is warm. But, I think, you do right to conform to the usual custom of catechising in Lent.

My method is to ask easy questions, and teach the children very short and easy answers.—The Lord's prayer was the last subject of our explanation.—In some such manner

I proceeded:—Why is this prayer called *the Lord's prayer*? Because our Lord Jesus Christ taught it us.—Why is Christ called *our Lord*? Because he bought us with his blood.—Why does he teach us to call God *Father*? That we may go to him, as children to a father.—How do children go to a father? With faith, not doubting but he will give them what they want.—Why *our Father in heaven*? That we may pray to him with reverence.—What is meant by God's name? God himself, and all his perfections.—What by hallowed? That he may be honoured and glorified.—How is God to be honoured? In our hearts, with our tongues, and by our lives, &c. &c.

On each question I endeavour to comprehend not all that may be said, but that only, which may be most level to their capacities, and is most necessary for them to know.—The answer to each question I explain in the most familiar manner possible; such a manner, as a polite hearer might perhaps treat with the most sovereign contempt. Little similes I use that are quite low, fetched *non ex academia, sed e trivio*—In every explanation I would be short, but repeat it again and again. Tautology, in this case, is the true propriety of speaking. And to our little auditors, the *crambe repetita* will be better than all the graces of eloquence.

I propose to explain to them principally the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the commandments: What relates to the two sacraments, at present, I do not attempt to set before them: Let them first have some tolerable notion of the former.—I fancy, you had better proceed in the same method. If I know your sentiments about baptism aright, with which our catechism begins, I should apprehend, it would be most prudent to go immediately to the great fundamentals.—However, pray to the Lord whose work you work; and he who is all-wise will direct you, he who is all-powerful will prosper you.—Pray give my very affectionate compliments to ***: Through the everlasting righteousness of our Redeemer, I hope to meet them in the world of glory; and there, he that is feeble, will be as David.

Your's sincerely, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXI.

Application of salvation the work of the divine Spirit.

Dear Sister, *Weston-Favell, May 27. 1750.*

THE country is now in its perfection. Every bush a nosegay, all the ground a piece of embroidery; on each tree the voice of melody, in every grove a concert of warbling music. The air is enriched with native perfumes, and the whole creation seems to smile. Such a pleasing improving change has taken place; because, as the psalmist expresses it, *God has sent forth his Spirit, and renewed the face of the earth*—Such a refining change takes place in mankind, when God is pleased to send his holy Spirit into the heart. Let us therefore humbly and earnestly seek the influences of this divine Spirit. All our sufficiency is from this divine Spirit, dwelling in our hearts, and working in us both to will and to do. Without his aids, we are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing.—Would we believe in Christ, to the saving of our souls? We must receive power from on high, and be enabled by this divine Spirit; for no man can say, that *Jesus is the Lord*, or exercise true faith on his merits, *but by the Holy Ghost*.—Would we be made like unto Christ? It can be done only by this divine Spirit. *We are transformed into the same image*, says the apostle, not by any ability of our own, but *by the Spirit of the Lord*—Would we be set on the right hand of our Judge at the last day? This is the mark that will distinguish us from the reprobates, and number us with his faithful people. For *unless a man, unless a woman, have the Spirit of Christ, they are none of his*.—But, since we infinitely need this enlightening and sanctifying Spirit, is the God of heaven equally willing to give it? He is; indeed he is. To obtain this gift for us sinners, his own Son bled to death on the cross. That we may be made partakers of this gift, he intercedeth at the right hand of his Father: and he has passed his word, he has given us a solemn promise, that *if we ask, we shall receive*

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ceive it. See, remember, and often plead in prayer, Luke xi. 13.

From your affectionate brother, &c.

L E T T E R XXXII.

The laudable strife of a Christian.

Dear Sir,

London, Sept. 4. 1750.

OUR dear friend ** is much engaged in making interest to succeed the minister of **, who, though not stone dead, is ill enough to alarm the hopes of neighbouring preachers. O! that we may every one contend who shall bring most glory to the crucified King of heaven, and love most ardently his all-gracious and infinitely amiable Majesty! A strife this, which will not foment, but destroy malignant passions; in which strife, angels will be our competitors: honour and joy, the everlasting prize.

I wish our dear friend H—— the rich anointings of God's Spirit in composing, and the powerful presence of God's Spirit in delivering, his infirmity-sermon. My most cordial love is ever his, and ever yours.

Thank you I do sincerely, for your prayers to God in my behalf; and Oh! how shall I thank sufficiently him, who procured access for us through his blood! We often remember you, and wish and pray, that you may be a burning and a shining light in your generation.

Dear friend, adieu.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

The Christian spirit a charitable one.

My dear friend,

Sept. 11. 1750.

I Received your last favour. It was without date, but very welcome.—We have lost our zealous friend, for several days. He has been displaying the banner of the gospel

gospel at **, and gathering together the dispersed of Israel. We admire the hero that wins battles, takes towns, and leaves trophies of his victories in every place. But where will all such toils, and the very remembrance of them be, when the monuments of his labours endure for ever in heaven?

Thanks for your subscription: I have procured more of another friend. I shall soon be a poor man, here are so many necessitous objects. And who can bear to be in affluence, while so many fellow-creatures are in deplorable want? Especially, if we remember him, who, though he was rich, for our sake become poor; and had not where, (O! marvellous, marvellous abasement!) had not where to lay his head.

This night dear-Mr ** is with us; returned from his expedition, full of life, and rich with spoils. Spoils won from the kingdom of darkness, and consecrated to the Captain of our salvation.—I have been prevailed on to sit for my picture. If ever portrait was the shadow of a shadow, mine is such. O! that I may be renewed after the amiable image of the blessed Jesus, and when I awake up after his likeness, I shall be satisfied with it! This wish is breathed in a language, to me unusual. I generally comprehend my dear friend in such petitions, and make his eternal interests inseparable from my own.—On Sunday I heard the admired Mr ***. His text was Rom. v. 1. His doctrine evangelical. The faith which purifies the heart, and works by love; the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, comprehending both his active and passive obedience; the operation of the blessed Spirit, in producing this sound and lively faith; were the substance of his discourse.—I commit you, my dear friend, to the tender mercies of our God, and the powerful word of his grace; remaining

Inviolably your's, &c.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

*The comfort of Christianity a powerful motive to holiness.**My dear friend,**December 8. 1750.*

WHY do you say *Zimmermannus* is too comfortable for you? The comfort of Christianity is the sweet allurements to draw us to heaven, and the powerful instrument to fit us for heaven. If our affections are attached to the world, the comfort of Christianity is ordained, to wear us from its vanities, and win us to God. If we have sinned, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most sovereign means of wounding our hearts, and bringing us to repentance. When Nathan said unto David, *The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die*; then it is supposed, he penned the xxxliid Psalm, and poured out his soul in unreserved confession. When the blessed Jesus turned, and looked upon Peter, then his conscience smote him deep; then he went out, and wept bitterly. And how did his dear Master look? Was it a resentful upbraiding, menacing glance? Quite the reverse. Is this your promised fidelity? this your kindness for your friend? Ah! Peter! Peter! I feel more from your perfidy, than from all the insults of my enemies. But I know your weakness, and I am going to die for your guilt. Willingly, willingly, I lay down my life, that this sin may never be laid to your charge. Such was the language of that gracious look. I do not wonder that it fetched a flood of tears from his eyes. I find it impossible to refrain, on the bare meditation on it. O! that the adorable Redeemer may manifest his all-forgiving goodness in our souls, and sure it will overcome our most stubborn corruptions. What can withstand such heavenly love?—I know ***; and think you have a peculiar privilege in having opportunity and ability to succour so sincere a Christian. He will more than repay you with his prayers. Whatsoever you do for him, I am persuaded, will be done unto Christ. And who can do enough for him, who despised the shame, and endured the cross for us?

us?—Your writing paper came safe, and I would have returned it to the stationer as too coarse, but has, since its arrival, been seized; seized in the king's name, by one of the king's officers. Pray, have you taken care to pay duty? Have you not been deficient in some instance or other? O! said Gaius my host, when he heard of its coming back, it is good enough for me; it will just suit my purpose; I wanted such a supply:—so it is in his hands, to be employed in the service of a great King; whose name you can guess; whose goodness you have experienced; and for whose honour, I hope, we shall all be very zealous. What say you? will you turn the forfeiture into a free gift, by sending your full consent to the deed?—Our dear friend has been visited with a fever; attended by the doctor every day this week: but, blessed be God, is, we trust, upon the eve of a thorough recovery. He talks of preaching to-morrow, but I shall use my utmost interest to dissuade him. Let him desist for a while, that he may persist for a long season.—We have but a small share of ***'s company. O! that we may meet where we shall part no more, sin no more.—Adieu!

Ever your's, &c.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Faith in a suffering Saviour the foundation of a believer's comfort.

My very dear friend,

Dec. 20. 1750.

Y OUR letter found me, after a considerable delay in its passage,—where do you think? Where I never expected to go any more;—found me at London! From whence I write this, and return you my sincerest thanks.—Prevailed on by the repeated importunity of my friends, I came by easy stages to town, in order to try whether change of air may be of any service to my decayed constitution; for my worthy physician, Dr S—— has declared, that no-
thing,

thing, which he can prescribe, is likely to administer any relief.

I have reason to be convinced, from the accounts which your letter brings, and from the reports which I receive in this place, that here we have no continuing city. Thanks, everlasting thanks to the divine goodness, which has prepared for us a mansion, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. A mansion, whose builder, whose maker, and whose glory is God.—Not only the disappointment, but even the acquisition of our desires, bespeaks the emptiness of the world. But what a complete felicity, what an all-satisfying portion, will the enjoyment of God be! When I awake up after thy likeness, (and am admitted to stand in thy beatific presence), I shall be satisfied with it.

I pitied, as I read poor Miss ***'s case. There cannot be a keener distress, than a conscience that is awakened, and a heart that desponds. *The spirit of a man will sustain his other infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?* A wounded spirit was the bitterest ingredient, even in the cup of our Lord's exquisitely severe sufferings. He that bore the racking tortures of crucifixion, without a complaint, cried lamentably, wept blood, when the arrows of the Almighty were within him. Then his soul was sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful, sorrowful even unto death. This dejection of our adored Master should be our consolation: his agonies are our ease; he was deeply sorrowful, that we might be always rejoicing. To believe, that he was wounded for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities; that he was destitute, afflicted, tormented for our sake; that by his vicarious, and most meritorious obedience unto death, he has obtained everlasting redemption for us,—firmly to believe this, is not arrogance, is not presumption, but our bounden duty, as well as our inestimable privilege. *This is his command, says St John, that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* Never, never was any command more gracious, or more worthy to be written on the tables of our hearts. Let us not, my dear Mr ***, by indulging unbelief—O! let us not dishonour the boundless mercy, and the inviolable fidelity of God; let us not de-
preciate

preciate the infinite merits, and all-prevailing intercession of our blessed Mediator. But say with the lively poet, Dr Watts, in his hymns,

*O! for a strong, a lasting faith,
To credit what th' Almighty saith,
To embrace the promise of his Son,
And call the joys of heav'n our own!*

You enquire about my new work, intended for the press. It is a great uncertainty, whether my languid spirits, and enfeebled constitution, will permit me to execute my design. It is a pleasure, however, to hear, that I am sometimes admitted to converse with you by my book. May the divine Spirit accompany every such conversation; and teach our souls to glow with gratitude to that transcendently great and gracious Being, who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; who stretched out his arms on the cursed tree, and laid the foundation of our happiness in his own blood.—Please to present my most respectful compliments to Mrs ***, your worthy neighbour Mr ***, and his nieces. Give me leave, instead of wishing you a merry Christmas, to wish them and you all that joy, which the holy prophet felt, when, in an ecstasy of delight, he cried out, *To us a child is born! to us a Son is given!* All the glories of heaven unite in his wonderful person; all the blessings of time and eternity are the fruit of his precious incarnation.—Adieu, my dear Sir, and cease not to pray for

Your ever affectionate, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

A caveat against despondency.

Dear Mrs —,

London, Feb. 5. 1751.

I Received your valuable letter, and thank you for it.—I am exceeding glad, and bless the unspeakable goodness of God, if he has made my poor ministry, in any degree, serviceable,

serviceable, or comfortable to your soul. I accompany my former labours (if such extremely feeble attempts may be called labours) with my repeated prayers, and bear my little flock on my supplicating, and affectionate heart, all the day long. O! that the gracious God may fulfil in them all the good-pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power!

I rejoice to find, that you know the truth: May you know it more and more; be established in it, and experience the efficacy of it.—May the truth make you free! free from the prevalence of unbelief, the dominion of sin, and the oppression of sorrow!—Give glory to God for opening the eyes of your mind, and bringing you to the riches of Christ. Take to yourself the comfort of this inestimable blessing, and by no means reject your own mercy.—Pray do not harbour hard thoughts concerning the blessed God, nor cherish desponding apprehensions concerning yourself, though always frail, and in every respect imperfect.—The great and good Father of our spirits, knows whereof we are made; he remembers that we are but dust; and will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss. Extreme to mark! so far from it, that to those who seek him in sincerity, seek him through his dear Son, he is tender and compassionate beyond all imagination. *As a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him, Psal. ciii. 13. And as a mother comforteth her son, so will the Lord thy God comfort thee, Is. lxxvi. 13.* Since we want loving kindness and mercy to follow us all the days of our life, blessed, for ever blessed, be the God of heaven, in these he delighteth, Jer. ix. 24.

O! cast thy burden upon the Lord, says the holy Spirit. Cast it upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an art which the Christian should be diligent to learn, and watchful to practise. Christ is a Saviour, but we neglect to make use of him: we are come to him, but we forget to walk in him.—When guilt accuses us, or guilt overtakes us, instantly let us fly to Christ, as the Israelites, when wounded, looked to the brazen serpent. There, let us say, there is the propitiation for this abominable sin. For this, and for all my other iniquities, his heart was pierced, and his blood spilt.

spilt. The vials of wrath, due to my provocations, were poured upon that spotless victim; and by his stripes I am healed.—If our own obedience is deplorably defective, so that we are sometimes ready to cry out with the prophet, *My leanness, my leanness! woe is me; let us turn our thoughts to the great Mediator's righteousness; this is consummate and divine; this was wrought out for us; this is imputed to us; in this all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and in this should they glory.*—If your prayers are dull and languid, remember the intercession of Christ. He ever appears in the presence of God for you; and how can your cause miscarry, which has such an advocate? If the poor widow was heard, even by the unjust judge; shall not the dearly beloved Son of God prevail, when he makes intercession to a most gracious Father? A Father, who loves both him and his people.—If you want repentance, want faith, want holiness, Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to give all these desirable blessings. *He has ascended up on high, has led captivity captive, and received gifts, spiritual gifts for men, yea, even for his enemies, for the rebellious.* It is his office to bestow these precious graces on poor sinners; and he is as ready to execute this office, as the mother is ready to administer the breast to a sucking child.—Do you read the scriptures? Still keep Christ in view. When dreadful threatenings occur, say, These I deserved; but Christ has bore them in my stead. When rich promises are made, say, Of these I am unworthy; but my Redeemer's worthiness is my plea; he has purchased them for me by his merits. *All the promises of God are yea and amen* (sure and certain to the believing soul) *in Christ Jesus.*

To make such a perpetual application of Christ, is to eat his flesh, and drink his blood. Thus may you, may I, may all my dear people, be enabled to pass the time of our sojourning here below! deriving our whole spiritual life, our pardon and sanctification, our hope, and our joy, from that inexhaustible fountain of all good.—Though I am not with you in person, I am often with you in spirit; and daily commit you to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls;

who is ten thousand times more condescending, compassionate, and faithful, than

Your truly affectionate friend, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

On cleaving to Christ.

Dear —,

I Received your kind letter; and am glad to find, that you and Mrs **, and Mrs **, often meet together, and like the people mentioned by the prophet, speak one to another of the things of God. Oh! let us *exhort one another* to faith, to love, and to good works; and so much the more, as we see the day, the day of eternal judgment, *approaching*. Ere long we shall hear the shout of the archangel, and the trump of God. Oh! let us imitate the wise virgins, and get oil in our lamps, true grace in our hearts; that we may be prepared for our Lord's second coming, and not dread, but love his appearing.

My departure from Northampton was sudden and unexpected. Could I have seen my people, and given them my parting advice, it should have been in the words of that good man Barnabas, who exhorted all the disciples, that *with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*.

Cleave, my dear friends, to the Lord Jesus Christ: cleave to his word: let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and be your meditation all the day long. Let the Bible, that inestimable book be often in your hands, and its precious truths be ever in your thoughts. Thus let us sit, with holy Mary, at the feet of Jesus; and I hope, we shall experience his word to *drop as the rain, and distil as the dew*.

Cleave to his merits.—Fly to his divine blood for pardon; it is the fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness. It purges from all guilt, takes away all sin; and, blessed be God, it is always open, always free of access.—Fly to his righteousness. Let us renounce our own, and rely on his obedience.

bedience. What unprofitable servants are we ! how slothful in our whole life ! how imperfect in every work !—But as for Christ, his work is perfect ; it is complete, and infinitely meritorious. *In this shall all the seed of Israel, all true believers, be justified, and in this shall they glory.*

Cleave to his Spirit.—Seek for the divine Spirit ; cry mightily to God for the divine Spirit. Let them that have it, pray, that they may have it more abundantly, and be even filled with the Spirit. This blessed Spirit reveals Christ, strengthens faith, quickens love, and purifies the heart. Christ died to obtain this Spirit for us : he intercedes for us that we may receive it ; and his heavenly Father, for his sake, has promised to give the holy Spirit to those who ask it. He has promised (O glorious privilege !) to give it more readily than a parent gives bread to a hungry child.

Cleave to his example.—Study his holy life, eye his unblameable conduct, observe his amiable temper : look to this heavenly pattern, as those that learn to write look to their copy : and God grant, that *we all beholding with open face the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord !*

Thus let us cleave to Christ the Lord.—Cleave with full purpose of heart, incessantly, closely, inseparably. Let us say with our father Jacob, *I will not let thee go.* Let us imitate the Syrophœnician woman, whom no discouragements could divert from her purpose. Temptations, difficulties, all the assaults of our enemy, should make us hasten to, and abide in the strong hold, the city of refuge : and he has promised, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* He will gather us with his arm, and lay us in his bosom. He will guide us by his grace, and receive us into his glory.—There, in those happy, happy mansions, may we, and many, very many of my dear flock meet, and never be parted more !—This is the heart's desire, and the daily prayer of

Their and your truly affectionate friend, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Comfort against the fear of death.

Dear—,

1751.

AND are you very weak? Is sickness in the chamber, and death at the door?—Come then, let us both sit down with dissolution and eternity in view; and encourage one another from the word, the precious word of God. I have as much need of such consolation as you, my dear friend, and may, perhaps, have occasion to use them as soon.

What is there formidable in death, which our ever-blessed Redeemer has not taken away?—Do the pangs of dissolution alarm us? Should they be sharp, they cannot be very long; and our exalted Lord, with whom are the issues of death, knows what dying agonies mean. He has said in the multitude of his tender mercies, *Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*, Is. xli. 10. This promise authorizes us to say boldly, *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me*, Psal. xxiii. 4.

Are we afraid to enter into a strange, invisible, unknown world?—It is the world into which our divine Master is gone; where he has prepared everlasting mansions* for his people, and has appointed his angels to conduct us thither.—Having such a convoy, what should we dread? And going to our eternal home, where our all-bountiful Redeemer is, why should we be reluctant?

Are we concerned, on account of what we leave? We leave the worse, to possess the better. If we leave our earthly friends, we shall find more loving and lovely companions. We shall be admitted among the innumerable

* John xiv. 2. Luke xvi. 22.

company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven *.—Do we leave the ordinances of religion, which we have attended with great delight? Leave the word of God, which has been sweeter to our souls than honey to our mouths? We shall enter into the temple, not made with hands, and join that happy choir, who rest not day nor night, saying, *Holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come* †.—And if our Bible is no more, we shall have all that is promised, we shall behold all that is described therein. If we drop the map of our heavenly Canaan, it will be to take possession of its blissful territories. *That city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof* ‡.—O, my friend! blessed, for ever blessed, be the grace of our God, and the merits of his Christ! We shall exchange the scanty stream for the boundless ocean; and if we no longer pick the first-ripe grapes, we shall gather the copious, the abounding, the never ending vintage.

Do we fear the guilt of our innumerable sins?—Adored be the inexpressible loving kindness of God our Saviour! our sins have been punished in the blessed Jesus: *the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all* ||. *He himself bare our sins, in his own body on the tree* §. So that *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus* **. O! that we may be enabled, with the apostle, to make our boast of this Saviour, and to triumph in this faith! *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

Is judgment the thing that we fear?—To the pardoned sinner it has nothing terrible. The Lord Jesus, who keeps his servants from falling, *presents them also faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy* ††. Observe the sweet expressions, *presents faultless, and with exceeding*

* Heb. xii. 22. 23. † Rev. iv. 8. ‡ Rev. xxi. 23.

|| 1st Cor. liii. 6. § 1 Pet. ii. 24. ** Rom. viii. 1.

†† Jude vers. 24.

joy. Justly therefore does the apostle reckon it among the privileges of the Christians, that they *are come to God, the Judge of all* * : for the Judge is our friend, the Judge is our advocate, the Judge is our propitiation, the Judge is our righteousness. And is it not a privilege to come to such a Judge, as will not so much as mention our iniquities to us, but condescend to take notice of our poor unworthy services; who sits on the great tribunal, not to pass the sentence of damnation upon us, but to give us a reward?—a reward of free grace, and of inconceivable richness.

Let me conclude with those charming words of the evangelical prophet, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people. saith your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for her Redeemer, her all-gracious Redeemer, hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins* † . May the God of our life and salvation make these scriptures be unto us, as a staff in the traveller's hand, and as a cordial to the fainting heart, that we may be strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that we may glorify him in death, and glorify him for death; because death will introduce us into his immediate presence, where we shall be sorrowful no more, sinful no more, at a distance no more, but be joyful, and be like our Lord: love him with all our souls, praise him to all eternity.—Let us then be of good cheer, soon in our heavenly Jerusalem we shall meet again. Because God is faithful, inviolably faithful, and infinitely merciful, who hath promised—promised to you, and promised to

Your affectionate friend, &c.

P. S. My kindest respects to Mr **, and Mrs **: bid them be of good courage, and go on their way rejoicing, for their Redeemer is mighty, his merits are unspeakable, and his love is unchangeable.—My most respectful compliments wait upon Mr **, and Mrs **. What a pleasure should I think it, was I able to execute the ministerial office, to bring home to their parlours the glad tidings of an

* Heb. xii. 23. † Is. xl. i. 2.

all sufficient Saviour, as well as to preach them in the pulpit! Polly, I hope, loves her Bible; may the word of Christ dwell in her richly; and may he be with your father and mother, now they are old and grey-headed.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

Comfort against the fear of judgment.

Dear —,

I Hope this will find you a little better in your health: but if it should find you in a weak and languishing condition, I hope a gracious God will sanctify what it contains, to the comfort of your soul.

Often consider, if you die, you will leave a world full of sin; a condition, full of frailty, ignorance, and misery; a body that has long been a heavy burden, a fore clog, both to your services, and to your comforts; and why should any one be greatly unwilling to leave such a state?—If you die, you will go into an unknown world: but the comfort is, you have a kind and faithful friend gone thither before; Jesus Christ, your best friend, and the lover of your soul, is Lord of that unseen world. Joseph's brethren were not afraid to go down into Egypt, when they knew that their dear brother was governor of the country. And since your most merciful Saviour is ruler of the invisible world, be not afraid to leave the body, and depart thither. It is said, the spirit of old Jacob revived, when he saw the waggons sent to carry him to his beloved son: and the poor languishing believer may look upon death, as the waggon sent by Jesus Christ, to bring his soul home to heaven.

But after death comes judgment, and this is terrible.—Consider, who is the Judge. Was the father that begat you, was the mother that bare you, or the friend that is as your own soul; was any of these to be the judge, and to pass the sentence, you would not be apprehensive of rigorous proceedings, you would expect all possible clemency: *Mercy, in this case, would rejoice against judgment.*---

But,

But, to our unspeakable comfort, we are informed by the scriptures, that a glorious person, far more merciful than a father, far more compassionate than a mother, far more affectionate than a friend, is to decide our doom; even the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us with an everlasting love. Who declares, that *a woman may forget her sucking child, much sooner than he forget to be merciful to those that put their trust in him.* For thus it is written, *God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, even Jesus Christ,* Acts xvii. 31.

The Judge calls himself our Husband, the Bridegroom of poor believing souls. And will the Bridegroom deliver to destruction his own bride, whom he has bought with his blood, and with whom he has made an everlasting covenant? *Is. liv. 5.*

The Judge vouchsafes to be our Advocate. And will he condemn those for whom he has long interceded? Will he condemn those for whom he poured out his prayers when he was on earth, and on whose behalf he has constantly pleaded in the presence of God? *1 John ii. 1.*

The Judge condescends to be our Head, and calls the weakest believers his members. And did ever any one hate his own body? Did ever any one delight to maim, or take pleasure to ruin his own flesh, and his bones? *Col. i. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 27.*

The Judge has been our victim, the sacrifice for our sins. And will he consign those to damnation, for whom he endured the agonies of crucifixion? If he has given himself for us, will he not with this gift freely give us all things? Give us pardon at that awful day? Give us the crown of glory, which fadeth not away? *Heb. ix. 14. 26.*

Farther to confirm your faith, and establish your hope, it will be proper to consider, what you have to plead. The proud Pharisee made his abstaining from gross iniquities, and his punctuality in some external performances, his plea. The blinded Jews went about to establish their own righteousness, and depended on this broken reed for acceptance. —But we have a surer foundation, whereon to build our comfortable expectations.

If arraigned on the foot of guilt; great guilt; manifold guilt; aggravated guilt; long contracted guilt; we have an atonement to plead, a sacrifice of unknown value, a propitiation glorious and divine. We have the blood of the Lamb to plead; blood that taketh away not one sin, or a few sins, or a multitude of sins only; but (O delightful truth!) taketh away all, all, all sins. Yes, it taketh away all sins from the believer, be they ever so numerous; all sins, be they ever so heinous, 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5.

Should the law take us by the throat, and make that severe demand, *Pay me that thou owest.*—It is paid, we reply, by our divine Surety. An incarnate God has been obedient in our stead. *In the Lord*, the Lord Redeemer, *have we righteousness.* And can the law insist on a more excellent satisfaction? Does not this magnify the law, and make it honourable? *By the obedience of one* (that is, Christ) *shall many be made righteous*, Is. xlv. 24. Rom v. 19.

Should it further be urged, *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*.—Is not holiness the thing that we have longed for? It is true, we have not attained to holiness; spotless and undefiled holiness; neither could we in the regions of temptation, and in a body of corruption. But has not our guilt been our sorrow, and our indwelling sin our heaviest cross? Have we not groaned under our remaining iniquities, and been burthened with a sense of our failings? And are not these groanings, the first fruits of the Spirit? Are not these the work of thy own grace, blessed Lord? And wilt thou not consummate in heaven, what thou hast thus begun upon earth?—Do we not desire heaven, chiefly because in those blessed mansions we shall sin no more; we shall offend our God no more; be no more forgetful of a dying Saviour; no more disobedient to the motions of a sanctifying Spirit? And shall we be disappointed of this hope?—It cannot, cannot be.—They that hunger and thirst after righteousness, are not filled, while they abide in the flesh; therefore there remaineth the accomplishment of this promise, they will assuredly awake up after the likeness of their Lord, at the great resurrection-day, and in another world, be fully, everlastingly satisfied with it.

I must now come to a conclusion:—But I cannot conclude without wishing you all joy and peace in believing.—*Though your flesh and your heart fail, may God be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever!*—I daily, I frequently make mention of you in my prayers: and, what is better than all, the dearly beloved of the Father remembers you now he is in his kingdom.—

I am,

Your very affectionate friend, &c.

L E T T E R XL.

The necessity of preaching Christ.

The following letter was sent to the preacher, by a cottager in a country village; and is here printed, to shew how thankfully the poor receive the preaching of the gospel, and to preserve so remarkable and useful a letter from perishing.

Rev. Sir,

I Humbly beg your pardon for presuming to write to you. Being one of your hearers, I was very much affected with your good sermons, having known and experienced the truth of them, viz. That persons must be convinced of their *undone* state by NATURE, and brought into a state of concern, or *self-condemnation*, before they will seek and earnestly desire the knowledge of Christ crucified.—To one who feels the condemning power of the law, Christ is precious.—Such have tasted the bitterness of sin: for till then, *They are alive without the law*, as St Paul saith, Rom. vii. 9. not seeing that the law requires perfect obedience, and that theirs at the best is very imperfect.—Hence the best of us in our carnal state are striving to be justified by our own works; yea, though we cannot but know that we often break the laws of God, Rom iii. 20. 28.

But then we think, It is true I am a sinner, and there is none without sin; thus we do presume upon our seeming
obedience,

obedience, not considering how great a change must be wrought upon our soul by repentance; and that we must be united to Christ by faith, and partake of his likeness, without which, Christ as to us, is dead in vain, (Gal. ii. 21.) And when the holy Spirit has convinced us of our misery by sin, (John xvi. 8.) and need of Christ; then, usually, we are thinking to do something to purchase an interest in him; not considering we must be humble supplicants at his feet, waiting for every thing we want at the throne of grace, as repentance, pardon, sanctification, redemption, as purchased by him: (eternal life is the gift of God, Rom. vi. 23.)

It is the humbled person who will accept of Christ, in all his offices, not only as a priest to atone for sin, but also as a prophet to teach, and a king to rule over him, and subdue all his sins.—The covenant of grace answers all our wants, there is not only mercy to pardon, but also grace to sanctify, and renew our nature. It is the humbled believer, who can sincerely say, *Christ is the power of God unto salvation*, (Rom. i. 16.)

And now I think nothing more needful than for clergymen to preach as you do; for though Christianity is generally professed amongst us, yet many seem as unconcerned about these things, as if there were no such truths in the gospel.—This is the way of preaching, which has ever been most effectual to the converting of sinners; and may the blessed Spirit attend the word preached, *purifying the hearts of your hearers by faith*, (Acts xv. 9.)—That the righteousness of Christ accepted, and applied to themselves, by a lively faith, may intitle them to heaven, (Rom. v. 19.); and that their sincere, though imperfect obedience, may evidence their title to be true and real, is the hearty desire

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servant.

To true believers, the law is set forth as a rule of manners, not as a law of condemnation, for *there is no condemn-*

ation to them who are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1.; or, in other words, those who love Christ, love his commandments, as kind rules of life, not obeying (like legal people) with reluctance, and out of fear of being punished: There is not, perhaps, a greater, or more important truth, than that in proportion as our faith in the Redeemer, evidenced by our works, increases, so our fear of death proportionably decreases.

L E T T E R XLI.

On time and eternity.

Dear Sister,

London, Jan. 3. 1751.

I Have taken my pen in hand to write to you, and yet have no news to transmit. I have nothing to send but my good wishes, and my best advice.

The old year is gone; and, if we look back, what a nothing it appears! Departed as a tale that is told. Thus will our whole life appear, when our end approaches, and eternity opens: but eternity will never expire; eternity will last world without end. When millions, unnumbered millions of ages are passed away, eternity will only be beginning. And this short life, this little span, is the seed-time of the long, long eternity. What we sow in this state, we shall reap in the eternal state. Should we not therefore be careful, very careful, to improve our time, and make the best provision for an eternity of happiness? Should we not be careful to get faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; to get the love of God shed abroad in our hearts; and our souls renewed according to the amiable example of our blessed Redeemer?—This, and nothing but this, is true religion. Going to church, hearing sermons, and receiving sacraments, profit us nothing, unless they promote these desirable ends.

Fix, dear sister, this truth in your memory: a true faith in Christ, an unfeigned love of God, and a real holiness of heart, are the greatest blessings you can desire. Without them we shall not, we cannot, enter into the kingdom of heaven. These you should incessantly, you should earnestly

ly

ly seek, through the whole advancing year; and these I most sincerely wish you, who am

Your very affectionate brother, &c.

L E T T E R XLII.

The excellency of humility.

My dear friend,

I Am glad to find that the beloved traveller called at your house, and gave you so much of his company. Cold as the weather was, did not your heart burn within you? Burn with zeal and love for that all-glorious God, whom he (excellent man!) so faithfully serves in the gospel of his Son.

May Mrs *** increase in humility, be more convinced of guilt, more sensible of depravity! and then she will grow in every other grace. Proud minds suffer the curse, imprecated on the mountains of Gilboa; while humble souls are like the vallies spread forth by the rivers; or as a field which the Lord hath blessed.

I think you should not have shewn her the free remark which I made; it was well meant, and she is well disposed, but human nature is very, very depraved. And perhaps there is no greater instance of it, than our proneness to take offence at the least disparaging hint; nay, sometimes to fancy ourselves wronged, if we are not extolled to the skies. I heartily wish, the blessed Jesus may give this young lady, the ornament of a meek and humble spirit. That, being lowly in her own eyes, she may be exalted by the great God.

I see so much indigence, and so many distressed objects, that I begrudge myself all unnecessary disbursements of money. Who would indulge too much, even in innocent and elegant amusements, and thereby lessen his ability to relieve, to cherish, and comfort the Lord Jesus, in his afflicted members?

I wish you could have preached at Collingtree. My
poor

poor people long for the sincere milk of the word. You would have a congregation, all of them honouring you, most of them attentive to you, and many of them edified by you — It grieves me, it pains me at my very soul, that I am dismissed, or rather cut off, from the honourable and delightful service of the ministry. — But, to be resigned, perhaps, is better than to labour; and an adoring submission for me at least more proper, than a zealous application, O! may I bow my head, and dutifully stand in the lot, which the almighty Sovereign pleases to assign!

Ever yours, &c.

L E T T E R XLIII.

On spiritual sloth.

My dear friend,

London, Saturday night,

I Congratulate you on ***'s recovery. Why do you call her ***? It is a strong temptation to vanity. She must be deeply ballasted with humility, not to be puffed up at such a tittle; which assimilates her to one of the most lovely and accomplished characters, that ever was described.

O! that we all may be recovered from that lethargic indolence, which deadens our attendance to the one thing needful? What a God have we! how immensely glorious! and how little do we reverence him! — What a Saviour! how unutterably gracious! and how little do we love him! — What promises! how inviolably faithful! yet how feeble is our affiance in them! — What a heaven! how transcendently delightful! yet how languid are our desires of it! — O! that the blessed, blessed Redeemer, may baptize us with the Holy Ghost, as with a flaming fire! to quicken, animate, and kindle into a glow of devotion, these benumbed souls of ours! — I must add no more, only that I am, with great sincerity, though in great haste,

Inviolably your's, &c.

L E T -

L E T T E R XLIV.

Comfort against reproach.

Sir,

London, Feb. 23.

MR *** and Mr *** may have tried, and may repeat their attempts, to alienate the affections of my Collingtree hearers. I am under no concern with regard to myself.—*Fragili cupiens illidere dentem.*

Offendet solido—will, I believe, be the issue of their endeavours. I am only sorry for the people's sake, that they should squander away their ministerial talents, and ministerial labours, to so poor a purpose. Let them be more incessant in warning every man, and teaching every man, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.—Thus let them seek to win their affections, and, I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, in their success. Dear Sir, the way to secure the love of others, is, to love them, to pray for them, and with a willing assiduity to set forward their true happiness. This, whenever I was amongst them, my people will confess, I did not cease to do. And the God of heaven knows, I daily bear them on my heart, and often recommend them to the tenderest mercies of our everlasting Father. Never therefore be apprehensive of my losing either their esteem with regard to my conduct, or their affection with regard to my person. O! that their precious souls were as firmly united to Christ, as their favourable opinion is secured to me!—Well, should neighbours undermine us, and friends forsake us, the adorable and all-condescending God is faithful. He changeth not. His word of grace endureth for ever. He loves his people with an everlasting love. And O! what worms, what dust, what mere nothings, are all men, are all creatures, before that infinitely blessed Author of all perfection! What a sense had the psalmist of this weighty truth, when he poured forth that rapturous exclamation; *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none, there is nothing on earth, that I desire in comparison of thee!* May this, my dear friend,
be

be the continual language of your heart; and of his, who hopes to be both in time and to eternity,

Affectionately yours, &c.

L E T T E R XLV.

The evil of unbelief.

My dear friend,

London, March 28. 1751.

YOU depend, you say, upon my promise; and see, how readily it is performed.—And if you depend on the execution of a promise from a frail, frail creature; will you not much more expect accomplishment of promises, made by that adorable Being, *whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth?* O! that we may not dishonour God's goodness, dispirage his veracity, and depreciate his dear Son's unspeakable merits, by unbelief, base, vile, destructive unbelief!

I have not an opportunity of communicating your news to our dear friend. He has left London.—It is not known when he will return. He is not expected, till some months are expired. And who, how many, may be gone into eternity, before that period is arrived!

You ask, how it fares with my health? You may remember, that I have more than once answered such an inquiry with silence; for I do not like to be upon the complaining string, and I cannot say, my health is either restored, or improved. When your letter came (not till Tuesday about five o'clock) it found me in a state of extreme languor. I had written nothing, done nothing, since dinner. Though I took up an easy and entertaining book, I was obliged to lay it down again. Thus I spend, rather thus I lose many hours: so that between intervening company, and debility of spirits, I make but a very slow, scarce any progress in my intended work.

I have no news, though at the great mart of intelligence. My sister is safely delivered of a son, which puts one in mind of the glorious piece of news, celebrated by the angels;

gels, and foretold with a rapturous delight by the prophet,
—*To us a child is born; to us a son is given. His name shall
be the mighty God; and yet his office shall be, to bear our
sins in his own body on the tree. May this news be ever
founding in the ears, and ever operative on the hearts of,
my dear friend, and of,*

His ever affectionate, &c.

L E T T E R XLVI.

The happiness of having communion with Christ.

My dear friend,

Tottenham, May 30. 1751.

I Am now at my brother's country-house—pray who is
Mr ***, the writer of the letter inclosed in your's?
He asks me, to get him a curacy; little aware, that I am
but a curate myself. I believe, the world has a notion,
that I am a dignified, or a beneficed man at least. Dear
Sir, may it be your benefice and mine, to do good to souls!
and our highest dignity, to glorify the ever-blessed Redeem-
er! who for our sake had not where to lay his head, till
he was numbered with the transgressors, and laid it in the
silent grave.

I hope your health is established; and how does your
soul prosper? Do not you delight to think of, to talk of,
to have communion with, that wonderful, that amiable
Being, whom to know, is wisdom; whom to enjoy, is
happiness? happiness, not to be described by words,
only to be understood by experience. Oh! that we
may follow on to know him! Then we have a prom-
ise—a promise more stable than the foundations of
nature, that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.
Gold has no value, and diamonds lose their lustre, when
compared with those unsearchable riches of Christ, which
Mr *** so largely enjoys himself, and so freely offers to o-
thers. His ministry is signally owned by his condescend-
ing, and almighty Master. Many, I am told, of the super-
ior, as well as lower orders in life, attend his ministry.
And if there be efficacy in united prayers; if there be zeal
in the Lord God of hosts, for the honour of his dear Son—

if there be faithfulness and compassion in our exalted Saviour—his labours will—they will be blest. May they every day, every hour, be blessed more abundantly!

Most cordially your's, &c

L E T T E R XLVII.

The promise of God the Christian's shield.

My dear friend,

Tottenham, July 14. 1751.

I am sorry to hear your account of Mr ***: see what snares are around us; how the devil endeavours to obstruct our usefulness, by blemishing our credit. May the ministers of Christ be upright and undefiled in the way! or else they will not be able to reprove and exhort with all (no, nor with any) authority. The God of power and faithfulness says of his church, says of his people; *I the Lord keep it. I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it: I will preserve it night and day* *. May this promise be our shield! be fulfilled to us evermore! Do not you go on, my dear friend, to lay up these precious pledges of heaven in your memory, and enrich your heart from them, by frequent meditation! They are the seed of faith. By these we are to be made *partakers of the divine nature*. *Partakers of the divine nature!* Volumes cannot explain, what is comprised in those few words. May we know what they mean by happy, happy experience!

I pity poor Mr ***, knowing what it is to be in a state of languishing. Ah! ah! my dear Sir, lay up a stock of comfort, get your graces lively, while animal nature blooms. When the blast of sickness smites, and our strength becomes labour and sorrow; how miserable must be our condition, without an interest, an established interest in the all-glorious Redeemer!

Why do you cherish distrustful thoughts of the blessed God? Is he not boundless goodness? Is not his goodness greater than the heavens? Does not his mercy, that love-

* H. xxvii. 3.

ly attribute, endure for ever? All the kindness of the most endeared relations, compared with the tender compassions of a God in Christ, are no better than cruelty itself. Read the last chapter of Hosea. *Hide it within your heart.* Turn it into prayer to the King of heaven; and I hope it will be to your soul, as the dawning day after a darksome night.

Our dear friend has met with uncommon favour and acceptance. Excellent man! How does he work while it is day! How sweet to such a labourer, will be heaven's everlasting rest! There may you meet him! and there find, as a monument of infinitely free grace in Christ,

Your truly affectionate, &c.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

Deliverance from trouble ground of thankfulness.

My dear friend,

Oct. 18. 1751.

TWO of your letters are now before me, who expected long ere this to have been before the Judge of quick and dead.—Blessed be God, I am got down stairs, and the day before yesterday went abroad in a coach. Oh! what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me! yet didst thou turn and refresh me; yea, and broughtest me from the depth of the earth again. Oh! my dear friend, how shall I be thankful? May that infinitely good and gracious God, who has given me such cause, give me power to be grateful. May I be enabled to devote every moment of that life, which he has prolonged, and every faculty of that body, which he has preserved—devote them wholly to the honour of his blessed name.

Poor ***'s case I commiserate. The charge attending my illness will be considerable, but I am not without hopes that my father will be so good as to defray it, then my hands will not be streightened: O! that my bowels may never be streightened, but may I draw out my soul to the hungry.

I am glad to hear that a seventh edition of Dr Stonehouse's book is demanded — May it go forth in the name, in the strength, and for the honour of the blessed Jesus. and may it prosper ! though, as you observe, he and I think differently on some points ; nor is the Doctor an admirer of my favourite author Mr Marshall.—The acceptance however which God has given to his and to my own writings, should send both of us oftener to the throne of grace, and quicken our applications to the divine goodness ; that his all-powerful Spirit may accompany our instructions, and make them a real blessing to our readers.

—I write, as a poor prisoner that lately expected to have the sentence of death executed ; but has now got a short, uncertain reprieve. May I never forget how much I shall want an assured faith in the all-glorious Redeemer, when that awful change approaches. Let us labour after such a firm establishment in Christ, such an unshaken affiance in his merits, and such an unfeigned love of his name, as may make it gain to die, and the day of our dissolution better than the day of our nativity.—Poor Dr *** ! O ! may he and his afflicted partner find consolation in the faithfulness, the goodness, the unsearchable riches of Christ ! these, apprehended by a sweet, assured, soul-reviving faith ; these, I say, are our sovereign support under all troubles, and our most effectual preservative from all temptations. We believe, blessed, blessed Jesus, help our unbelief !

I am,

My dear Sir,

Ever your's, while, &c.

L E T T E R XLIX.

On boldness and courage for Jesus Christ.

My dear friend,

London, Jan. 14. 1752.

I know you will excuse my long silence, and acquit me on the receipt of this letter, though I own myself in
your

your debt for another. When I have a lucid or a lively interval, I think it my duty to employ it, in attempting to finish my little work. Which, alas! proceeds as slowly, as my blood creeps heavily through my veins. Happy, happy they! who have firmness of nerve, and fertility of thought; and are enabled to devote them both to their gracious Redeemer's service.

Please to pay my best thanks to Dr Cotton, for his very delicate *visions*. I wish they may do good, and promote virtue; then, I am persuaded, they will answer the benevolent intention of the author. I wish at the same time, that he would be a little explicit and courageous for Jesus Christ. He deserves it at our hands, who for our sake endured the cross, and despised the shame. He will recompense it into our bosom, by owning us before his Father, and the holy angels. Nor can I ever think, that the spread of our performances will be obstructed, by pleasing him who has all hearts and all events in his sovereign hand — A vision upon death, without a display of Christ, seems to me like a body without a heart, or a heart without animal spirits. I am sure, when I was lately (as myself and every one apprehended) on the brink of eternity, I found no consolation but in Christ. Then I felt, what I had so often read, that there is no other name given under heaven, whereby man may obtain life and salvation, but only the name, the precious and inestimable name of Jesus Christ. Oh! that its favour may be to us, both living and dying, as ointment poured out.

Tell Mrs **, that she has not offended me; but I am grieved, that I should give her occasion for such a suspicion.

You refer me to 2 E'dr. v. 33 †. It is a sweet passage, a noble and comfortable truth: and the apparent doctrine of scripture, however found in an apocryphal book. — Oh! that we may seek more assiduously to our all-condescending and omnipotent Friend. He will never upbraid

† And I said, Speak on, my Lord: then said he unto me, Thou art sore troubled in mind for Israel's sake: lovest thou that people better than he that made them?

us for our importunity; he will never disappoint our hope; he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think: and, blessed for ever be his name, as is his power, so is his love to his people, his children, his heirs. In this blessed number may he rank my dear friend, and his

Ever affectionate, &c.

L E T T E R L.

On hearing of a friend's distress.

TO his MOTHER.

Honoured Madam,

April 6.

I Received your favour of the 4th instant. Am very sorry to find, my father is so ill. Hope and earnestly pray, that the great eternal Lord of life and death will rebuke his disorder, and restore him to health.—You need not doubt of being remembered in my supplications to the throne of grace. O! that they were better! O! that they proceeded from firmer faith, and were accompanied with greater fervour! Poor and weak as they are, they are often put up in behalf of my honoured parents, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may *strengthen them with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.* May give them an humble resignation to his blessed will; enable them to rejoice even in their tribulations, and make *all things work together for their good*—their exceeding great and everlasting good.

I have, in obedience to your orders, put my affairs in readiness to leave the city. But hope there will be no occasion for such a speedy removal.—But if I should come, alas! what can I do? My weakness is inconceivable. None can know it, but the all-searching God. I am evidently worse, now the milder weather is advancing.

I am glad to hear my sister holds well. God always mingles our cup of affliction with some sweetening drops. None but Christ, that dear and adored Redeemer—none but

but Christ, had gall without any honey, and vengeance without any mercy. Blessed be his most holy name for enduring all kind of misery, that we might want no manner of thing that is good.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R L I.

Christ the foundation of the believer's joy.

Dear Sister, *London, Miles's Lane, Dec. 22. 1751.*

Y^Esterday in the afternoon, Mr ** and his mother called upon me; he offered to convey a letter or any message to Weston. I could not neglect this opportunity of sending you my best wishes, and the congratulations of the season.

Please to thank my mother for her kind letter.—The wine was to have come last week, but my brother forgot to give the necessary orders, until it was too late. I hope no such disappointment will happen, if we live to see the end of this week. I wish you much of the divine presence, and joy of the Lord in using it. May we all drink of those living waters, which Christ Jesus has promised in his gospel! of which they who drink, shall thirst no more; but they shall be in them a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.—Pray let me know, what those living waters mean?

I have no present to make you this Christmas, unless you will accept one from God's holy word. In the ninth chapter of Isaiah, it is foretold, that poor sinners shall not only have a good hope, but shall even rejoice before God. — Rejoice with exceeding great joy; such as the husbandman feels, when he gathers in his harvest, and receives the reward of all his toil. Such as the soldier experiences, when he has conquered his enemy, and is dividing the spoil.

What shall be the source of this joy?—Their worldly wealth? Alas! *Riches make themselves wings, and fly away. They profit not in the day of wrath.*—Their carnal pleasures? These are always froth, and frequently gall. To be enamoured

moured with these, is death.—Their own good deeds ! These are a broken reed, a filthy rag ; and should cover us with confusion, not fill us with conceit.—Whence then is this joy to flow ? From Christ, wholly from Christ : He is the rich gift of God, he is the pearl of great price ; the only consolation of sinners, and the supreme joy of his people.—Therefore the prophet adds, in the language of triumph and exultation, *To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.* This child is Jesus Christ, who is the foundation of all our comfort, the spring of all true delight.—He is the Son of the Most High, yet given to be made man, to be made a sacrifice, to be made a curse, for us.—So great, that the government of universal nature is upon his shoulders. The sceptre of supreme authority is in his hand : He is *head over all things to his church*—So glorious, that his name shall be called Wonderful. God and man in one matchless and marvellous person, clothed with clay, yet possessed of all the fulness of the Godhead. Like Jacob's ladder ; whose foot was fixed on earth, while the summit was lost in the skies.—So gracious, that he is the Counsellor to instruct ignorant creatures, and by his word and Spirit make them wise unto salvation. The mighty God ; to subdue our iniquities, to write his laws in our hearts, and make us partakers of a divine nature. The Prince of peace ; reconciling us to God by his death, and making peace by the blood of his cross ; by applying these blessings to our consciences, filling us with that peace of God, which passeth all understanding. The everlasting Father ; to cherish us under the wings of his providence and grace, to make all things work together for our good ; and prepare for us an everlasting inheritance ; *even the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*—O may the adorable Redeemer be all this to us ! The prophet repeats this expression, *To us.* This circumstance is of the last importance. Then only is Christ our fountain of life, and full of delights, when he is all this, does all this, to us, even to us.

Let this scripture be the subject of our meditation, a-
midst

midst the approaching solemnity. And may an everlasting sense of its blessings, give an additional, a heavenly relish to all our other entertainments!—

I am your affectionate brother, &c.

L E T T E R LII.

Reconciliation to God previous to our performing holy duties.

Dear Sir,

IT is not the difficulty of answering Dr ***'s question. That makes me avoid it, but the disagreeable nature of the office. As it will oblige me to shew, that he entirely mistakes both the nature of the scriptures, and the nature of man. He would make Dr ***'s and Dr ***'s sentiments of things, the touchstone of divine revelation. What is level to their apprehensions, must be right; what comports with their notions, must be true. At this rate, they are not *doers of the law, but judges*. On the contrary, if they do not understand the doctrine of union with Christ, or the fitness of free justification to promote holiness, it is because their understandings are darkened: it is a sign, that they want the eye-salve; a proof, that their senses are not exercised to discern between good and evil.

Dr *** has Roman virtue; but indeed he very much wants the eye-salve. He sees no glory and comeliness in Christ, but much in his own conformity to the commands of his Maker.—While such sentiments possess the mind, people have no eyes to discern the beauty of free grace. Christ is just as insignificant, as the physician's offering to prescribe for a person in perfect health.—I am sure, my poor, lame, mangled conformity to my Maker's commands, fills me with shame, and would make me hang down my head as a bulrush. But my Lord's death, my Lord's obedience, my divine Lord's merit, encourages me, emboldens me, and enables me to say, *Who shall condemn me?*—Be pleased by the bye, to compare Dr ***'s foundation for comfort and confidence, with St Paul's, Rom. viii. 33. 34.

D d

Who

Who is in the right, I leave you to determine. I will only venture to assert, that Paul of Tarsus had as much conformity to the commands of his Maker as our amiable friend. Oh! that he was less amiable in his own eyes, and knew himself to be *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* See Rev. iii. 17.

1st, "A persuasion of our reconciliation to God, previous to our performance of holy duties."—Dr ** asks, What is the foundation of such a persuasion?—To which I answer, The doctrine delivered by St Paul, Rom. v. 10. *When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* From this passage he will see, that reconciliation to God is previous to our performance of holy duties. It is a blessing procured for enemies; and to say, that enemies have performed holy duties, is to confound the difference between rebels and subjects; is to make rebellion and allegiance the same.—Nay more, this blessing has no manner of dependance on our performance of holy duties, because it is procured, not partially, but wholly procured by the death of Christ. It is not said, *When we, who were sometime enemies, began to perform holy duties; but when we were enemies, while we were enemies, and considered only as enemies.* Then, even then.—Wondrous grace! grace worthy of a God! Will not such grace incline the rebels to throw down their arms?

The Doctor having laid down some premisses, makes this inference; "Hence the phrase of our reconciliation to God, 'when we have renounced our sins.'" But does this inference tally with the apostle's declaration, or is it the proper consequence of his doctrine? Let not the acute disputant, but the wayfaring man judge.

"Our blessed Saviour," adds the Doctor, "directly asserts, 'that the performance of religious duties is the sole evidence of our reconciliation.'"—We are not enquiring about the evidences of reconciliation, but about the way to acquire them. To determine, what are the evidences of a cure, is easy enough; but to prescribe the expeditious and certain method of working the cure, this is the thing we want. Here, according to my poor opinion, Mr Marshall
excels

excels as much in the spiritual, as Dr ** in the animal *Therapeutica*.

The Doctor urges our Lord's words, *Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you*.—Wandering from the point again. The question is, How we shall be animated strengthened, and enabled to do them?

Upon this subject reason tells us, that such a discharge of religious duties can alone convince a Christian of the sincerity of his profession.—It may be so; but pray Madam Reason, do not be impertinent, we did not ask your opinion upon the point; if you would speak to the purpose, you must tell us, how we may be enabled to discharge these religious duties. Does your Ladyship know, which is the first religious duty? I question it; be content therefore to receive information from scripture. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*. This is the first religious duty; now tell Dr ** and me, tell us honestly and explicitly, how we can perform this duty? Is it possible to love the Lord, to love him with all our heart, if we look upon him as incensed against us, unreconciled to us? Is it possible to love him when we apprehend ourselves to be under his wrath, or suspect that he will prove an enemy to us at the last?

The Doctor having a higher opinion of reason † than I, is a greater favourite with her; I would therefore beg to know of him, what reply she makes to this interrogatory; and I promise before-hand, that I will stand to her award, if she can point out any method of practising this duty, different from that proposed by Mr Marshall; then my favourite author and myself, will submit to the charge of Enthusiasm.

2dly, “A persuasion of our future enjoyment of the heavenly happiness, previous to our performance of holy duties.”

I ask Mr Hervey, “What is the foundation of such a persuasion?”—Mr Hervey answers, Our free justification through Jesus Christ, which we receive under the character of ungodly persons; consequently before the perform-

† Reason I mean, in her present fallen state.

ance of good works, Rom. iv. 5.—I answer again: The free promise of God; God *hath given unto us eternal life*, 1 John v. 11. But is not this promise founded on our own duties and obedience? No, but on the duties and obedience of our great Mediator: *This life is in his Son*.

In the first book of the sacred writings is this important interrogatory, made by God himself; *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?*—Here I beg leave to ask, in my turn, Which is the person who does well? Dr **, who would persuade us to reject the gift of God, (1 John v. 11.), and not believe his word? Or Mr Marshall, who would engage us to credit the divine declaration, and receive the divine gift? The apostle says, by not believing this record, we *make God a liar*, 1 John v. 10. And shall we call this doing well? or is this the way to be accepted?

The Doctor farther urges, in the very last chapter of the same sacred volumes we are told, *Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life*—Let me ask again, Does the Doctor remember, what the commandments of the Almighty are? He may see them reduced to two particulars, and ranged in the exactest order, 1 John iii. 23. The first of these commandments is, *That we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*. Let the Doctor only interpret this precept, tell me what is included in this injunction, and I am inclined to think, he will find each of Mr Marshall's preliminary articles contained in its import. To believe in Christ, is to *live* under a persuasion, that he has died to reconcile me to God; that he has obeyed to obtain eternal life for me; and intercedes in heaven, that I may receive the Holy Ghost the Comforter.—Take away these ingredients from faith, and its spirit evaporates; its very life expires, you have *nothing* left, but a mere *caput mortuum*.

The Doctor charges us “with spiritual pride.” But is it pride, to confess ourselves ungodly wretches; and as such, to receive free justification from infinitely rich grace?—“With presumption and unwarrantable persuasions.”—But is that a presumptuous claim, or that an unwarrantable persuasion, which is founded on the infallible promise of God, and implied in the very nature of faith?—He bids

us "beware, lest we be the dupes of our own credulity." We thank him for the friendly admonition; and, to shew our gratitude, we would suggest a caution to our worthy friend, that before he argues on a religious subject, he would gain clearer ideas of its nature. He talks of reconciliation, as implying concern and grief. Here he fights with a shadow, and a shadow of his own raising; no mortal ever affirmed or dreamed of any such thing. Reconciliation is neither more nor less, than a removal of offence, and a restoration to favour. He mentions Mr Marshall's three propositions, as the requisite signals of faith, whereas they are the constituent parts, the very essence of faith; they differ as much from a signal, as the florid blood and lively spirits differ from the bloom on the cheek, or the sparkle in the eye.—He tells us, "that the faith of the Jews was one thing; but after our Saviour's death, the faith of the Gentiles was another." St Paul, who was a Jew by birth, and an apostle of the Gentiles by office, tells us the very reverse. *There is one faith*, of which, Christ the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, was and is the invariable object. *To him give all the prophets*, as well as all the apostles, *witness, that whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins*. Believing in Christ, we see, is the one constant, unalterable way, in which both Jews and Gentiles, the hearers of the prophets, and the converts of the apostles, obtained pardon, life, and glory.

Had Doctor ** observed this caution, he would not have spent so many needless and random words on the third proposition, which proceed upon an absolute mistake of the point. "We advocates for self-sufficiency in man!" I wonder how the ingenious Doctor can entertain such a suspicion, especially as he knows, we have subscribed, we believe, and we maintain the tenth article of our church. He has blamed us for this belief; therefore he should, in all reason, blame himself for those extravagant excursions of his pen; which are just as far from sobriety and fact, as the antipodes are from the latitude of London. Our maxim and Mr Marshall's meaning is—Though less than nothing,
though

though worse than nothing in ourselves, we can do all things through Christ's strengthening us.

I am, &c. &c.

L E T T E R LIII.

On neglecting to preach Christ.

Dear Sir,

Weston, 1756.

I Confess I am covetous, and like covetous people, unreasonable; I was in hope of receiving another favour from your pen, before I troubled you with a fresh solicitation.—But an affair has lately happened, or rather a project has started in my mind, which I will lay before you.—On Sunday last a neighbouring clergyman sent me for my perusal, a sermon preached by Dr T**, before the house of commons, on the late public * fast. When I perused it, and saw not a single mention of Christ, nor a single hint of an evangelical nature, I was surprised and grieved: and so much the more, as it was preached by one of the most celebrated divines in the kingdom, and before the whole kingdom convened in their representatives. I thought it was a pity that such a notorious slight put upon our most glorious Redeemer, should pass without animadversions. I could not forbear wishing, that the Lord would enable me, even me, (the least and weakest in my heavenly Father's house), to bear my testimony for Jesus who was crucified. I therefore conceived some thoughts of publishing a sermon preached at Weston, upon a subject somewhat similar to his; for though mine is designedly plain, and destitute of the polite Doctor's embellishments, yet it has more of Christ and his gospel. I also apprehended, if to this were prefixed and subjoined some remarks upon the Doctor's performance, it might not be unseasonable, nor unprofitable.—Now, my dear friend, if you approve the design, would you draw up some remarks upon the Doctor's discourse,

* The public fast in February 1756.

while I am endeavouring to retrieve my sermon, from a few hints, which I happened on that occasion to put down in short-hand? I will own to you, my heart almost trembles at the prospect of appearing in print against so eminent a man. And if you do not think it proper to be my help and abettor, I must drop the design. May the Lord Jesus, whose honour is concerned, whose blood and righteousness, whose Spirit and grace have been disregarded, and treated as ciphers; may he direct your determination, fructify your invention, give you all knowledge and all utterance! What think you of this method of proceeding?—Making remarks upon the unevangelical passages—pointing out the places where an opportunity offered of enlarging upon gospel-topics—exemplifying this gospel-manner, and shewing that it would be no prejudice, but give infinite weight and force to the argument. But I leave all to the blessed God, and my dear friend.—Your last, I think, is a most masterly piece of controversy, for which I am your debtor. May you now be enabled to outdo yourself. The subject and the occasion are of the last importance; if you are inclined to exert yourself, pray let it be in the courtly manner. Your last pen was dipt in vinegar, let this be dipt in oil.

My sermon was on that text, Exek. xviii. 27. I shall wait, with incessant prayer to him, whose name is WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, till I receive your answer.

And am,

Most affectionately your's, &c.

L E T T E R L I V .

Some remarks on not preaching Christ.

*Mr Hervey's friend on considering the proposal in the preceding letter wrote the following; and addressed it to Dr T***, the preacher of the fast sermon in 1756, on Jer. xviii. 7. 8.—It is here printed, as the observations therein contained may possibly be in some measure productive*

tive of the good, which Mr Hervey intended by such like remarks.

Rev. Sir,

SOME time ago was put into my hands a sermon of your's on Jer. xviii. 7. 8. preached before the honourable house of commons, on the day of the late public fast; wherein I thought I saw some very material omissions and mistakes, which I feared might hinder the success of your ingenious performance; and therefore, as I would neither have you to labour in vain, nor the best use of such alarming calls of divine providence neglected, I could not but give you the trouble of a letter upon this occasion.

Nothing can be more proper, at such seasons, than serious discourses upon repentance and reformation: times of affliction are most likely to be times of reflection: and when it pleases the Most High thus to open the heart, it is then the time for his servants to sow the good seed of his word. To prepare men for this, God's judgments fly swift as the light. To prepare men for this, he *hews by his prophets, and slays by the word of his mouth*: and happy, eternally happy, are those who are influenced thereby, to return from their evil ways, and to make their ways and their doings good: for thus runs the divine promise—*At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy; if that nation against whom I have pronounced this, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them*, Jer. xviii. 7. 8.

Such is God's gracious declaration, which no gospel-minister can read, but it must remind him of two things. *First*, That this promise is made in Christ Jesus, and therefore can belong to none but those who forsake their sins, and return unto God by him. Then, this return from evil must be accomplished through the grace and Spirit of Christ. And,

First, The mention of this, and every other promise in the book of God, must remind the gospel-minister that it is made in Christ Jesus. St Paul hath assured us, that *all the promises of God in him are yea, (made), and in him, amen, (confirmed)*;

(confirmed); and if all the promises of God are made and confirmed in him, then this as one must be made in him. The Redeemer himself has informed us,—that he is *the way, and the truth, and the life*, and that *no man can come unto the Father but by him*.—But to turn from evil, and to come unto the Father, are terms of the same import. Besides, we know that it is only through Jesus Christ that we have peace with God, and that it is only through Jesus Christ that God has reconciled the world to himself. *Can two then walk together except they are agreed?* Can God sheathe the sword of his justice before he is reconciled to us? If not, how can he repent of the evil that he thought to do unto us? and if he repents not of the evil, which he thought to do unto us, where is our interest in the promise?—But what need of any more words, when it is most evident, that it is the Son of God who here speaks by the prophet? the same person promises mercy, who had threatened to destroy with the severest judgments: now we know that *the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father*. It is very plain then, that all who return from evil must return by Christ; they must return with his price in their hands, and his robe upon their backs, and then, and not till then, they are safe, safe for time and eternity.

Again; when the gospel-minister reads this gracious promise, he will remember that such a returning from evil must be accomplished through the grace and Spirit of Christ. How can we, who are not sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought of ourselves, think of returning to God and holiness? Can the captive who is in love with his chains long for liberty? Can the sinner who is fond of his sins desire to relinquish them? No; it is as possible for *the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as for us, who are accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well*. Nay, far more possible; for, to accomplish this, they need only to change their hue; but before we can attain to holiness, we must change our nature: we must *make ourselves a new heart and a new spirit*, (Ezek. xviii. 24.); we must quit the grave, and arise from the dead; and *who is sufficient for these things?* Therefore the Master says,—No

man can come unto me, except the Father which has sent me, draw him — And again—Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have ordained you to bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.—For without me ye can do nothing.—And his apostles assert,—that by grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God: that every grace is the fruit of his Spirit, of whose fulness we have received, and grace for grace: and that we are created anew unto good works, which God had before ordained that we should walk in them.

Now, Sir, are these the true sayings of God? are these the very words of our Lord, and his apostles?—Then undoubtedly to refuse them, is to *refuse him who speaks from heaven*: And if so, how comes it to pass, that you have unhappily forgot to take notice of these things upon this solemn occasion? God promises security to all who forsake their sins, and return unto him in Jesus Christ, and yet Jesus Christ is never mentioned in your sermon. Without divine grace, and the sanctifying operations of the holy Spirit, we can do nothing; and yet there we hear nothing of divine grace, or the holy Spirit. Joab ready to take Rabbah, the royal city of the Ammonites, so ordered the campaign that his master David might have the honour of the victory: but here is a Christian minister, who attacks a citadel of human corruption, and never so much as once thinks of Christ, through whom he must conquer. Here is a Christian minister, who leaving the lively oracles, undertakes spiritual wickednesses with the carnal weapons of a Tully and Demosthenes. Mistake me not, I speak not against oratory as such: but if a Roman or a Greek philosopher, who had never heard of Christ, can say as much against the vices of the age, as you can who have from your infancy been educated in the Christian religion; what say you more than others? Is not this too much to slight that bleeding dying Lamb of God, who alone can *take away the sin of the world*?

But the slight put upon our Master's words is not all; your not taking notice of these things, has unhappily led you into mistakes that are utterly inconsistent with his undertaking.—You call upon us, “by every act of humiliation

“ and

“and repentance, to deserve the protection of Heaven;” and throughout your whole discourse you labour hard to fix our hopes upon this basis, and our after obedience. But can the sincerest repentance, or the deepest humiliation, deserve the favour of God, and the remittance of punishment? If so, then fallen Adam might have broken in pieces the chains of eternal death, in which he was holden: and then, what need of shedding the blood of the promised seed? What need of such a sacrifice to appease God, if he was already appeased, or could be appeased by the relentings of man? Briefly, if the death of Christ was necessary to purchase eternal redemption for us, then our repentance and humiliation can never deserve the divine favour.

Nor can our after obedience procure such protection. Perfect obedience is a debt continually due from every creature as such; and the payment of a debt due now, can never be a compensation for the non-payment of arrears: nor can the most exact payment of what is due from one's self, be esteemed the least part of payment of what is due from another; and therefore where the debt is obedience, as all creatures are bound to obey at all times, none but a God can pay off the score of any one delinquent. This is a tremendous consideration, even supposing true repentance, and a thorough reformation, were wholly in our own power: but when as sinners we are entirely without strength, Rom. v. 6. 8. when (as I have already observed) these gifts are perfectly dependent upon grace, and the good Spirit of God; surely, to talk of deserving the favour of Heaven, by them, must be extremely absurd. Nor is it only extremely absurd, but extremely dangerous; as it places the merit of works higher than ever the Papists placed it, and is utterly inconsistent with the humble genius of the Protestant religion.

But your neglect of taking proper notice of these things, not only leads you to disregard the express sayings of our Lord, and to nullify his work, but to heal the wounds of the daughter of God's people slightly. You complain of our “profaneness and immorality; of our profligacy and
“unjust opposition to lawful authority; of our disregard
“to decency and good manners, as well as to the laws of
“our country; of that unlawful pursuit of pleasure; that

“luxury and extravagance, which insensibly preys upon the constitution, debases the sense, and corrupts the morals of our people.”—And these are evils that you ought to complain of; they are the sure signs of a declining consumptive state, and can never be enough lamented. But then, you never touch upon that root of bitterness which bears this gall and wormwood: you say nothing of our *unbelief*, which keeps us at a distance from God, from whom we must receive every good and perfect gift: you say nothing of *faith*, without which it is impossible to please him, to turn from evil, or return to him. Nor do you take the least notice of our *enmity to the blessed Jesus*, and his holy gospel; of that *proneness to rebellion*, and naughtiness of heart, from whence proceeds every evil thought, and word, and work. These things you ought to have remembered, and not to have forgotten the other.

Had you remarked upon these evils in the moral view you have taken of our national vices, it would naturally have led you to point out suitable remedies. You must then have persuaded us to labour after an union with Christ, the fountain of grace, by faith; and this radical union with him would have produced a moral union, and have transformed us into his likeness: where faith had been implanted, love would have flowed; and where love had flowed, there must have been ready and chearful obedience; for *the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned*. But without these gracious habits internally wrought, what will all the outward reformation in the world do for us? Have you not read of the Pharisees? did not these people keep clean the outside of the cup and the platter? Far from being guilty of any scandalous immorality, they prayed in the streets, made broad their phylacteries, fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all that they possessed: yet were their inward parts so filthy, that they finally became obnoxious to a judgment ten thousand times worse than what has befallen the unhappy inhabitants of Lisbon. Let us not deceive ourselves; neither outward reformation, nor outward morality are sufficient; neither outward professions, nor outward duties will make a man a Christian. The King's daughter

daughter is all glorious *within*, as well as *without*; and if we belong to the Redeemer, we must be sanctified by him both in soul, and body, and spirit.

If you would reform the world, **PREACH THE GOSPEL**: the gospel contains the only motives, that can possibly prevail upon any to embrace it. People may talk of the amiableness of the divine Being, and the charms of virtue, thereby to allure us to return to the one, and to embrace the other; but without a true faith in the promises of pardon and acceptance, true repentance can never be attained; and a free and gracious pardon and acceptance is no where promised, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. The goodness of God freely offering pardon and peace, must lead us back to him, or we approach him no more. Earthquakes, famine, pestilence, or any other evils, have their use only as they discover to us our present condition, and greatly enhance the offered kindness; but we love God because he first loved us: we love Jesus Christ because he obeyed and died for us; and his great love thus manifested, does not urge, but constrain us to love him again; because *we thus judge, that if one died for all, then we are all dead; and he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.* These are the cords of a man, and the bands of love, wherewith we are drawn to our heavenly Father. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;* and if God so loved us, surely we ought to love him again, and to testify our love by a suitable obedience. When no creature (as I have hinted) could furnish a righteousness that might be imputed to us, who can but stand amazed, that the Father should send his only begotten Son to obey in our stead? When no creature could bear the wrath of an offended God, and by dying overcome death, who can but stand amazed, that the Son of God should be sent to suffer and to die, that we might live through him?—Who can but stand amazed, that the Son of God should take our nature upon himself, that he might thus obey and die for us? How can we behold him thus dying for us, and not die to that sin for which he died? When love so unprecedented speaks so loud, who can but hear, and wonder, and return to the Lord?

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What I have said, I think, plainly shews, that your discourse might have been far more evangelical; and as plainly shews, what superior motives to repentance and reformation would have occurred if it had been so; so that, humbly recommending my remarks to your serious consideration, I might here have concluded my letter; but as you allow, that the late earthquakes "have hitherto been the
"merciful warnings of a kind and good providence, to
"dispose us to hear the rod; and to consider, with that
"awe which becomes us, the hand which hath appointed
"it:"—a few eclairsissements upon one of the lessons which you have advanced under that head become absolutely necessary. lest by mistaking the case, we should lose the benefit of our neighbour's afflictions.

You recommend upon this occasion—"our guarding
"ourselves against any hard censures, which a reflection
"upon these extraordinary calamities encourage in minds
"too readily disposed to judge with severity." And conclude, "That it is certain that we have no right to de-
"termine what are the particular intentions of Providence
"in this dispensation."—But certainly we have a right to determine, that such punishments are inflicted because of sin; else, how do they (in your own words) "speak to us
"the language of the divine displeasure?" Else, how can they be considered as punishments to correct some, and to warn others? Else, how can they be considered as the louder calls of anger? or, of what use to bring us home to ourselves? This you must grant, or you pull down all that you have before builded, and make yourself a trespasser. I allow, that we have no right to conclude these unhappy people to be greater sinners than ourselves, because of their greater sufferings; this would lead us Pharisaically to cajole ourselves in our iniquities, rather than to take warning by others; yet we are allowed to look upon them as very great offenders. Our Saviour does not reprove his disciples for thinking those Galileans, whose blood * Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, to be very great sinners; but for thinking them to be greater sinners than themselves,

* See Luke xiii. 2.

which is indeed a temper of mind utterly inconsistent with true repentance.

We are allowed then to suppose the Portuguese to be great sinners, and that the Lisbon earthquake was a punishment inflicted for sin; and if we can discover any thing in their conduct, that might tend to bring down this divine judgment upon them, it will be our wisdom to take warning by it, and carefully to avoid it as a fatal snare: and surely we may see some things in them, which God has, in all ages, punished with the most severe chastisement. As,

First, Idolatry. It is impossible but that you, Sir, must have heard of the stupid profaneness and idolatry of these people; of their mock processions, and barbarous mimicry of the Redeemer's sufferings, such as was a scandal to human nature, and such as never tarnished the most profane rights of Heathenism. Such fopperies, this horrible punishment should caution us carefully to avoid; and to avoid every means that would lead us into them; it should make us carefully abide by the gospel of Christ, which is *the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; and wherein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith*: it should make us careful to live up to it, lest for neglecting so great salvation, God should give us up to *strong delusions to believe such lies, and to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.*

Secondly, Persecution. We all know, that at Lisbon the barbarous inquisition reigned in all its horrors, and that thousands have there fallen a sacrifice to it, whose blood has long cried aloud for vengeance; and we know, that persecutors have been most severely punished in all ages: so that, taught by this dreadful judgment, we should carefully avoid this crime; a crime of so deep a dye, that in its highest stage, when it strikes at the truth as such, it becomes irremissible, and can never be forgiven either in this world, or in that which is to come. I allow that these people are connected to us by every tie but that of religion; but this of itself constitutes so vast a difference, that whenever we are disposed to speak most favourably of their failings, and attribute them to the prejudices of education, or the

the weakness of human judgment, we should still remember, that we are Protestants, and they were Papists: and indeed, to us, as Protestants and Christians, there is something in this divine judgment so very remarkable, that, if rightly considered, it may greatly confirm us in both.

As Protestants, we all look for the destruction of Antichrist and his kingdom; and here we behold a city, whose unequalled trade, in gold and silver, and precious stones, was a proper type of that spiritual merchandise so many hundred years vended by her mother Rome; like whom, she was built upon seven hills; like whom, as a most obedient daughter, she was a nest of idolaters and persecutors: and as she was so like her mother in every thing, we have all the reason in the world to think, that Rome like Lisbon shall one day be punished. Most remarkable it is, that on the day which she had abused to rob the eternal God of his honour, and to give it to the whole host of heaven; on the day which she had abused in shedding the blood of thousands; on that very day God came down to hold his *Auto de fe*, and her own blood was required. Thus, when her mother Rome shall say, *I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow; in that very day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.*

As Christians, we all look and wait for the coming of our Lord unto judgment, and therefore should pay a special regard to every token of his approach: he himself has told us, that before his coming, there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. When therefore we see any such things come to pass, we should *lift up our heads, for our redemption draws nigh*: nor need we to fear, if Christ dwells in our hearts by faith; if we are rooted and grounded in love, though the heavens and the earth fly away, and their place be found no more; for the Lord

of hosts is with us, and Jesus Christ is our refuge. In whom I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your sincere well-wisher, &c.

L E T T E R L V.

A plan for a treatise on gospel-holiness.

Dear and Reverend Sir,

YOU need no apology for delaying your answer to my letter. You have a precedent to plead, which must, if not satisfy, yet strike me dumb; but I propose, if the Lord assist, to be more punctual for the future, in acknowledging the favours I receive from my valuable and valued correspondents; among whom, I shall always reckon Mr **.

I am much obliged for your very just and very important remarks: they give me such an idea of your knowledge in the things of Christ, and your acquaintance with experimental religion, that I must beg leave to lay before you the plan which I have sketched out for my treatise on *gospel-holiness*; with an earnest request, that you will rigorously examine it, and freely pass your judgment upon it. Suggesting, where-ever it is improper, the means of rectifying it; where-ever it is defective, a method for completing it.

The PLAN.

Pleasure and happiness of Christ's religion.—We must partake of the comforts of the gospel, before we can be fitted to practise the duties of the law.—Theron oppressed with fears, on account of his numerous sins; discouraged with doubts, on account of his imperfect obedience; the cordials of the gospel are re-administered, with some additional spirit and strength.—Holiness, gospel-holiness, its nature, necessity, excellency.—The endowments, necessary to fit us for the practice of holiness; a persuasion of our

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reconciliation

reconciliation to God, the hope of everlasting happiness, and an assured expectation of grace sufficient for us.—The grand efficient of holiness, the blessed Spirit; the principal instrument, faith. This renews the dispute concerning the assurance of faith. Objections to it stated, discussed, answered.—Holiness more particularly delineated in its several branches, and deduced from, or founded upon, evangelical principles; such as, I beseech you by the mercies of God: ye are bought with a price: ye are the temples of the living God: God hath forgiven you, &c.—All these privileges, though not hereditary, yet indefeasible; or the final perseverance of believers. This eminently conducive to holiness.—The scriptures, prayer, Lord's supper, when mixed with faith, are effectual means of holiness.—Our friends part, and renew their epistolary correspondence. Theron, desirous to glorify the God of his salvation, asks advice concerning the best method of family-worship, educating children, instructing servants, and edifying his acquaintance.—On each of these particulars Aspasio satisfies his inquiry. Enlarges on the subject of education, especially the education of daughters, as that seems to be most neglected, or the proper manner of conducting it least understood.—*Letter on the covenant of grace*; comprizing the substance, and being a kind of recapitulation of the preceding volumes.—*Letter on the way of living by faith in the Son of God, or the way of reducing all the gospel-doctrines to suitable practice*—Aspasio seized with a sudden and fatal illness. His sentiments and behaviour in his last moments.

This, dear Sir, is my rough draught. Apply the compasses and plummet: examine it with your rule and line. Improve my plan; assist me, with your advice and prayers, to execute the work; and may the great Master-builder enable me to bring forth the top-stone, for the honour of his holy name, and for the edification of his chosen people.

I am, dear Sir,

with unfeigned affection, your brother in Christ, &c.

N. B. *As Mr Hervey did not live to finish his plan, and as he was himself apprehensive that he should not, he desired in*
his

his preface to Marshall on Sanctification, that Marshall might be considered as a supplement to Iheron and Aspasio, and as a kind of substitute for what he intended to write on the same subject, according to the plan here proposed.—His words are, “I do by these presents depute Mr Marshall to supply my lack of service.”

L E T T E R LVI.

On assurance of salvation.

Madam,

I Am pleased not a little, to hear a lady of your fine sense and blooming years, declare, That an enquiry relating to everlasting salvation; “has taken up much of her thoughts.” Let me entreat you to go on, and imitate that excellent woman, whose panegyric is uttered by Wisdom and Truth itself; *Mary hath chosen that better part, which shall not be taken from her.*

You enquire, “Whether the elect of God have not an inward assurance, that they shall be saved?”—Your casuist takes leave to answer the question, by asking another. Why should not you and I, Madam, have this assurance?—Is it not a blessing, intended for Christians in general? *We know, says the apostle, that we are passed from death unto life.* He says not I, and some eminent saints,—but *we*; including those believers, to whom he wrote, those, among whom he preached, and all those who hereafter should believe, through his word.

Is not this a most desirable knowledge? On the other hand, can any thing be more afflicting, than a state of suspense with regard to this all-important affair? To be in suspense whether my final lot will fall, in the regions of endless misery, or the mansions of eternal glory?—Insupportable!—Can it be the will of our most indulgent Creator, that we should spend our days, in this sad uncertainty, and distressing anxiety?—Impossible!

But have we a warrant for this assurance?—We have the best of warrants, the gift of God. If your papa gives

you a pair of diamond ear-rings, or (which rightly improved, will be much more ornamental) a neatly printed Bible; do not you look upon this as a sufficient warrant to call these presents your own? Do not you rest fully assured, that by virtue of your parent's gift, they are your unquestionable property?—Perhaps you will say, Where has God Almighty done any thing like this? where has he given salvation or life eternal to me?—Be pleased to consult 1 John v. 11. * and you will find an answer; which, I hope, will prove perfectly satisfactory and highly delightful.

Is this spoken to me?—To you, Madam, to the young ladies of your acquaintance, and to every one that reads it. Life eternal is given, just as the manna was given in the wilderness. The manna, that each hungry Israelite might gather and eat it. Life eternal, that every poor sinner may receive and enjoy it—But I have no merit, nothing to deserve it.—Then you have just as much as the all-gracious God requires. *Without money, and without price*, is his bountiful declaration. *Freely* and abstracted from all deserts, are his generous terms. You have no merit, Madam, and I have less than none. But has our divinely excellent Redeemer nothing meritorious? For his sake, this magnificent and glorious gift is conferred. Not we ourselves, but *Jesus Christ the righteous has obtained eternal redemption for us.*

May I then assuredly believe, that God gives eternal life to me?—May you glorify God's truth? may you glorify his grace? may you glorify the death and obedience of his beloved Son? If so, then you may, you ought, it is your privilege, and your duty to believe—that God Almighty freely gives to you eternal life.

When you receive this gift, look upon it as your portion; live in the most comfortable expectation of it; relying on nothing valuable in yourself, but depending entirely upon the faithful promise of him who cannot lie.—Then you will feel your heart inclined to love your most adorable Benefactor—then you will study to please him in all your con-

* 1 John v. 11. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.

versation

versation—then you will be truly holy.—All which is, with great sincerity, wished by, amiable Miss ***,

Your most obedient servant, &c.

L E T T E R LVII.

On affliction.

Dear Sir,

Weston, Dec. 17. 1747.

I Truly commiserate your variegated calamity; and heartily with I could suggest any thing, which might be the means of administering some ease to your afflicted mind, and of assisting you to reap ample benefit from your distressed situation.

You well know, that all afflictions of what kind soever, proceed from God: *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things,* Is. xlv. 7. They spring not from the dust; are not the effects of a random chance, but the appointment of an all-wise, all-foreseeing God, who intends them all for the good of his creatures.—This, I think, is the fundamental argument for resignation, and the grand source of comfort. This should be our first reflection, and our sovereign support.—He that gave me my being, and gave his own Son for my redemption, he has assigned me this suffering.—What he ordains who is boundless love, must be good: what he ordains who is unerring wisdom, must be proper.

This reconciled Eli to the severest doom that ever was denounced.—*It is the Lord;* and though grievous to human nature, much more grievous to parental affection, yet it is unquestionably the best; therefore, I humbly acquiesce. I kiss the awful decree, and say from my very soul, *Let him do what seemeth him good,* 1 Sam. iii. 18.

This calmed the sorrows of Job, under all his unparalleled distresses; the Lord gave my affluence and prosperity; the Lord has taken all away; rapacious hands and warring elements, were only his instruments, therefore, I submit, I adore, I bless his holy name.

This

This consolation fortified the man Christ Jesus, at the approach of his inconceivably bitter agonies; *The cup which, not my implacable enemies, but my Father, by their administration, has given me, shall I not drink it?*—It is your Father, dear Sir, your heavenly Father, who loves you with an everlasting love, that has mingled some gall with your portion in life.—Sensible of the beneficent hand, from which the visitation comes, may you always bow your head in patient submission; and acknowledge with the excellent, but afflicted monarch Hezekiah, *Good is the word of the Lord concerning me,* 2 Kings xx. 19.

All afflictions are designed for blessings.—To do us good at the latter end, however they may cross our desires, or disquiet our minds at present.—*Happy* (says the Spirit of inspiration, and not wretched) *is the man whom God correcteth.* (Job v. 7.) And for this reason, because his merciful chastenings, though *not joyous but grievous*, yield the *peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.* (Heb. xii. 11.) God's ways are not as our ways. The children whom we love, we are apt to treat with all the soft blandishments, and fond caresses of profuse indulgence; and too, too often cocker them to their hurt, if not to their ruin.—But the Father of spirits is wise in his love, and out of kindness severe. Therefore it is said, *Whom he loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* (Heb. xii. 6.) Would you not, dear Sir, be a child of that everlasting Father, whose favour is better than life? Affliction is one sign of your adoption to this inestimable relation.—Would you not be an *heir of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?*—Affliction is your path to this blissful patrimony. *Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven,* Acts xiv. 22. Would you not be made like your ever blessed and amiable Redeemer? He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and every disciple must expect to be as his Master.

Perhaps, you may think your affliction peculiarly calamitous; and that if it had been of some other kind you could more chearfully submit, more easily bear it; but you are in the hands of an all-wise Physician, who joins to the
bowels

bowels of infinite love, the discernment of infinite wisdom. He cannot mistake your case. He sees into the remotest events; and though he varies his remedies, always prescribes with the exactest propriety to every one's particular state. Assure yourself therefore, the visitation which he appoints, is the very properest recipe in the dispensatory of heaven: any other would have been less fit to convey saving health to your immortal part, and less subservient to your enjoyment of the temporal blessings, which may, perhaps, be yet in store for you.

Should you enquire what benefits accrue from afflictions?—Many and precious—They tend to wean us from the world—When our paths are strewed with roses, when nothing but music and odours float around, how apt are we to be enamoured with our present condition, and forget the crown of glory, forget Jesus and everlasting ages?—But affliction with a faithful though harsh voice, rouses us from the sweet delusion.—Affliction warns our hearts to arise and depart from these inferior delights, because here is not our rest. True and lasting joys are not here to be found. The sweeping tempest and the beating surge, teach the mariner to prize the haven, where undisturbed repose waits his arrival. In like manner disappointments, vexations, anxieties, crosses, teach us to long for those happy mansions, where all tears will be wiped away from the eyes, (Rev. xxi. 4.) all anguish banished from the mind; and nothing, nothing subsist, but the fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

Afflictions tend to bring us to Christ.—Christ has unspeakable and everlasting blessings to bestow—such as the world can neither give, nor take away; such as are sufficient to pour that oil of gladness into our souls, which will swim above the waves of any earthly tribulation.—But are we not, dear Sir, are we not most unhappily indolent and inattentive to these blessings, in the gay hours of an uninterrupted prosperity? It is very observable, that scarce any made application to our divine Redeemer, in the days of his abode with us, but the children of affliction. The same spirit of supineness still possesses mankind. We undervalue, we disregard the Lord Jesus, and the unspeakable
privileges

privileges of his gospel, while all proceeds smoothly, and nothing occurs to discompose the tenour of our tranquillity.—But when misfortunes harass our circumstances, or sorrows oppress our minds; then we are willing, we are glad, we are earnest, to find rest in Christ.

In Christ Jesus there is pardon of sins.—Sin is a burthen, incomparably sorer than any other distress.—Sin would sink us into the depths of eternal ruin, and transfix us with the agonies of endless despair. But Christ has, at the price of his very life, purchased pardon for all that fly to him. He has bore the guilt of their sins in his own body on the tree. (1 Pet. ii. 24.) Have they deserved condemnation? He has sustained it in their stead.—Are they obnoxious to the wrath of God? He has endured it, as their substitute. He has made satisfaction, complete satisfaction for all their iniquities. (Rom. iii. 25. 26.) So that justice itself, the most rigorous justice, can demand no more. Oh! that distresses may prompt us to prize this mercy! may incite us to desire ardently this blessedness! Then it will be good for us to have been afflicted. (Psal. cxix. 71.)

Christ has obtained for us the gift of the holy Spirit, (Gal. iii. 2.), to sanctify our hearts, and renew our natures.—An unrenewed carnal mind, is ten thousand times more to be lamented, more to be dreaded, than any external calamities. And nothing can cure us of this most deadly disease, but the sanctification of the Spirit. This divine Spirit alone is able to put the fear of God in our souls, and awaken the love of God in our hearts. (Jer. xxxii. 40.) His influences suggest such awful and amiable thoughts to our minds, as will be productive of these Christian graces. This sacred principle subdues our corruptions, and conforms us to our blessed Redeemer's image.—How is this best gift of Heaven, disesteemed by the darlings of the world, who have nothing to vex them? But how precious is it, how desirable, to the heirs of sorrow?—They breathe after it, as the thirsty hart panteth for the water-brooks.—They cannot be satisfied without its enlightening, purifying, cheering communications. This is all their request, and all their relief, that the Spirit of Christ may dwell in their hearts, (Rom. viii. 9.); may enable them to possess their
souls

souls in patience, (Luke xxi. 19.) and derive never-ending good from momentary evils. Before I close these lines, permit me to recommend one expedient, which yet is not mine, but the advice of an inspired apostle, *If any be afflicted, let him pray.*—Dear Sir, fly to God in all your adversity, pour out your complaints before him in humble supplication, and shew him your trouble. (Psal. cxlii. 2.)—When I am in heaviness, says a holy sufferer, I will think upon God. (Psal. lxi. 2.) His omnipotent power, his unbounded goodness, whose ear is ever, ever open to receive the cry of the afflicted.—When the psalmist was distressed on every side, without were fightings, within were fears, the throne of grace was the place of his refuge; *I give myself to prayer*, (Psal. cix. 3.), was his declaration.—This method we read Hannah took, and you cannot but remember the happy issue, (1 Sam. i. 10.) Let me intreat you to imitate these excellent examples; frequently bend your knees, and more frequently lift up your heart, to the Father of mercies and God of all consolation; not doubting, but that through the merits of his dear Son, through the intercession of your compassionate high Priest, he will hear your petitions, will comfort you under all your tribulations, and make them all work together for your infinite and eternal good.

In the mean time I shall not cease to pray, that the God of all power and grace, may vouchsafe to bless these considerations, and render them as balm to your aching heart, and as food to the divine life in your mind. I am, dear Sir, with much esteem, compassion, and respect,

Your very sincere wellwisher, &c.

L E T T E R LVIII *.

*Comfort and advice to two malefactors.**My poor fellow-sinners,*

I Received a letter from you, and should have visited you, but my health is so much decayed, and my spirits are so exceedingly tender, that I could not well bear the sight of your confinement, your chains, and your miserable circumstances, as I can hardly bear the thoughts of your approaching execution, and your extreme danger of everlasting destruction. But because I cannot come in person, I have sent you the following lines, which I hope you will consider, and which I beseech the God of all grace to accompany with his blessing.

You have been already condemned at an earthly tribunal; you are also condemned by the law of God; for thus it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them* †. If every violation of the divine law exposes you to a curse, what a multitude of curses are ready to fall upon your unhappy souls!—And remember, this is not the curse of a mortal man, but of the great, eternal, infinite God. If it was dismal to hear an earthly judge command you to be hanged by the neck till you are dead; how much more terrible to hear the almighty Judge denounce that unalterable sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels* ‡!—Had you committed but one sin, this would have been your deserved doom: *The wages of sin, of every sin, is death* ||. How much more of those manifold sins and multiplied transgressions, of which your consciences must accuse you!—You are soon to suffer the punishment of the gallows, and you

* This letter was wrote from Weston-Favell to two condemned malefactors, in Northampton Goal, (namely, James Smart, and Joseph Brown), about the middle of July 1755.

† Gal. iii. 10.

‡ Matth. xxv. 41.

|| Rom. vi. 23.

are liable to the vengeance of the most high God; for thus saith the holy word, *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men* *. If against all and every instance of ungodliness, then how much more against your crimes, which have been of the most abominable and horrid kind! — *The wrath of God!* Tremendous word! Who knoweth the weight and terror of his wrath? At his rebuke the rocks melt like wax, the earth is shaken out of its place, and the pillars of heaven tremble. How then can you endure the furiousness of his wrath, and the severity of his vengeance? and that, not for a day, a month, or a year, but through all the ages of eternity! Yet this is the doom of them *that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* What can you do in this distressed condition? What indeed! If you had a thousand years to live, you could not atone for one offence. How then can you make satisfaction for millions of provocations, in the space of a few days? — Alas! you are lost, utterly lost, in yourselves irrecoverably lost. May the God of all power, make you sensible of your undone state! sensible that you are upon the brink, the very brink, of an amazing, an unfathomable downfall. Perhaps you may say, Is there no hope then? Is the door of heaven shut, and without any possibility of being opened to us? Must we sink into unquenchable burnings; and is there not so much as a twig for us to catch at? Yes, my poor fellow-sinners, there is not only a twig, but a tree, even the Tree of life, a sure support, which if the Lord enables you to lay hold on, you may yet, even yet, be saved. Oh! beg of his wonderful goodness to accompany what you are going to read, with his holy Spirit.

Christ, the all-glorious Son of God, pitied the deplorable case of such sinners. He not only pitied, but resolved to succour and relieve them. For this purpose he came into the world, and was made man. Nay more; he came into the place, and stood in the stead of sinners. — Because we

* Rom. i. 18.

had broke the commandments of the law, he fulfilled them in all their perfection. Because we deserved the punishment of the law, he sustained it in its utmost extremity.—He became poor, and had not where to lay his head, though heaven and earth were all his own.—He submitted to scorn and reproach, though all the angels of God are bidden to worship him. Nay, he was condemned to death, the most shameful and tormenting death, far more shameful, and unspeakably more tormenting, than the death which you must shortly undergo. He suffered unknown pangs in his body, and inconceivable anguish in his soul, from the indignation of God. In a word, he suffered all that shame, all that torment, all that vengeance, which the unnumbered sins of the whole world deserved. Here then is your door of hope.—Sins are borne by Christ; and though there be much iniquity, *there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus* *.—Wrath is borne by Christ, so that sinners who deserve eternal vengeance, are reconciled to God, and saved from wrath through him †.—A righteousness is wrought by Christ, a perfect and everlasting righteousness, such as brings incomparably greater honour to God's law, than all our transgressions bring dishonour. By all this he has merited and obtained a full deliverance, and a complete redemption.—Are you not ready to cry out—O blessed Saviour! O precious redemption! What a happiness, if we might be interested in this Saviour, and partake of this redemption! Millions of worlds for such a blessing!—You need not give millions of worlds, no, nor any individual thing. These blessings are given freely without money, and without price, without any deserving qualifications in us. All that are justified, are justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.—But we are sinners, vile sinners; we have not only nothing good, but much and grievous guilt.—The Lord convince you of this more and more! Yet remember for whom Christ died, he died for the ungodly.—What says St Paul? *In due time Christ died for the ungodly* †.—He died for the unjust.—What says St Peter? *Christ hath*

* Rom. viii. 1.

† Rom. v. 9. 10.

‡ Rom. v. 6.
once

once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust*—What says our Lord himself? *The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*—Are you not ungodly men? are you not unjust persons? are you not lost creatures? For such, even for such the divine Jesus died. Wonderful love! adorable compassion! The Lord enable you to lay hold on this hope set before you!—Perhaps, you may say—We are not only sinners, but the chief of sinners.—O! that you were convinced of this!—To be the chief of sinners, makes you unpardonable before men; but this is no difficulty with Christ, and should be no hindrance of your coming to Christ. Christ's merit and righteousness are infinite. They are as able to satisfy for a debt of ten thousand talents, as for a debt of a single farthing. Hear what the scripture saith upon this subject, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief†.* He came not to save sinners only, but the very chief of sinners. And he is able to save them to the very uttermost.—But our sins are heinous, they have been often repeated, and long continued in.—What says the apostle? *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.* Another apostle declares, *By him, by the divinely excellent Redeemer, all that believe are justified from all things, from all accusations, be they ever so numerous; from all iniquity, be they ever so enormous.* Nay, so wonderfully efficacious is the power of his death, that through his great atonement, sins which are as crimson, are made white, white as snow‡.—But will Christ vouchsafe this great salvation to us? Hear his own words, *He that cometh to me for pardon and salvation, I will in no wise cast out.* Be his guilt ever so great, this shall be no bar. I will not on any consideration reject or deny his suit. Only let him come as a poor undone creature, and he shall find me willing and mighty to save. Nay, he invites you to come; these are his gracious words, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, heavy laden with sin and misery, and I will give you rest*||. I will deliver you from

* 1 Pet. iii. 18.

† 1 Tim. i. 15.

‡ Is. i. 18.

|| Matth. xi. 28.

going down into the pit, I will deliver you from the vengeance of eternal fire." All your sins shall be upon me, and all my righteousness shall be upon you.—Go to a great man on earth, beg of him to use his interest in your behalf; he would scorn to take notice of you. But your dear, tender, compassionate, most condescending Saviour, invites you to come to him, and assures you he will not abhor nor cast you out.—Go to your earthly judge, intreat him on your bended knees, to pardon you.—He, perhaps cannot, must not: the laws forbid him. But it is not so with Jesus Christ, he has made a full satisfaction for sin: he has made an infinite atonement for sin; and were your sins ten thousand thousand times greater than they are, before the power of his death they would all vanish away; by the washing of his blood, they would all be as though they had never been.

This then should be the one desire of your souls, your incessant prayer to God, that you may come to Christ, that you may believe in Christ, you may be found in Christ: then you will not perish, though you deserve it, but have everlasting life, through his name; then you will have just the same foundation for your hope, as I must myself have when I shall depart this life. When I shall be summoned to the great tribunal, what will be my plea, what my dependance? Nothing but Christ! Christ would I say, has been wounded for my sins, therefore they will not be punished in me. Christ has fulfilled all righteousness in my stead, therefore I trust to be justified when I am judged. I am a poor unworthy sinner, but worthy is the Lamb that was slain, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for whose sake I shall receive both pardoning mercy, and everlasting glory. This is my only hope, and this is as free for you, as it is for your friend and fellow-sinner, &c.

P. S. What I have written, I shall beg of God to bless; and will attend you with my prayers, though I cannot visit you in person.

L E T T E R LIX.

On the state of the saints after death.

Dear Sir,

AS the interval between the hour of our dissolution, and the day of resurrection, will, in all probability, be very considerable, much longer than the time of our continuance on earth; it is a very reasonable and important inquiry, to examine into the circumstances of this state. The scripture, our infallible director, which is (so copious upon all the grand articles of religion, and) silent upon nothing that relates to the true happiness of mankind, has not left us without information in this particular. Whereas, all other writers grope in the dark; not one of them has been able to draw back the curtain, or give us (any) the least insight into the invisible world: it is to them, and in all their systems, an absolute *terra incognita*.—A few of the scriptural discoveries may be seen, in the answer to the following queries.

1st, When the souls, the souls of the righteous, depart from the body, by whom are they received?—By holy angels. The angels were ministering spirits to them, in the days of their flesh, and will be their guard and their convoy, when they relinquish the earthly tabernacle. When Lazarus died, he was carried by angels.—What a comfortable privilege is this! Not to be left solitary and desolate, like a shipwrecked mariner on some unknown coast; but to be under the guidance and protection of those benevolent beings!

2^{dly}, In what place are they lodged?—This is described, not from our ideas of locality, or any properties of space, but from the society and the enjoyments. It is not very material, whether they are above or below, in the heaven of heavens, (which, I think, is most probable), or in some separate mansion. A disembodied spirit, if under the wrath of God, must every where be extremely miserable; if surrounded with his favour, will every where be exceedingly happy.

happy. To such a spirit, that has no longer any connection with sensible things, God's smile must be heaven, God's frown must be hell.---Where ever this region lies, we are sure it lies under the beams of the Sun of righteousness; Christ is there, and where he is present, happiness cannot be absent. *Thou shalt be with me*, is his promise to the penitent thief.---Abraham is there, the friend of God, and father of the faithful. Lazarus, we are told, was carried into Abraham's bosom, and where he resides. Where all the children of God, and heirs of glory dwell, there must be pleasures; ---such pleasures, that the place is called *paradise*; *Thou shalt be with me in paradise*: the delightful garden of Eden, which the Lord himself planted, and which innocent man inhabited, was incomparably the finest, noblest spot in this sublunary world; and this is used to give us some faint representation of these blessed abodes, where the souls and spirits of the righteous remain, till the shout of the archangel and the trump of God summon them.

3dly, How soon are they lodged in this desirable situation?---Without delay. I find no mention of any intermediate purgation, or of any period for inactivity and forgetfulness. *To-day shalt thou be with me*, is our Lord's expression; and it is observable, that the Jewish day was very near closing, when our Saviour gave up the ghost; nearer still when that converted malefactor expired.---*I have a desire to be dissolved*, says St Paul, *and to be with Christ*; he speaks of his release from clay, and his introduction into the Redeemer's presence, as instantaneous. No sooner does the former commence, but the latter takes place.---What an encouragement is this to fight the good fight of faith, and finish our course, with alacrity and diligence! since we are not to wait in wishful but disappointed expectation: no, the very moment our warfare is accomplished, our reward begins.---Which reminds me of another inquiry:

4thly, What is the condition of holy souls, in this separate state?

1. They *rest from their labours*; from all the disorders, that afflicted their bodies, from all the temptations that disquieted their souls. They are no longer ridiculed and persecuted by ungodly men. They have no more conflict with

the

the powers of darkness and their own corruptions; sin and sorrow cease eternally. They are freed, entirely freed, from every evil.

2. *They enter into peace.* They have then peace with God, peace in their own thoughts, peace with fellow saints, which passeth all understanding.---Peace implies a positive happiness.---Peace in the scriptural language, denotes all manner of blessings; and such is its import in the preceding passage. In this large extent will it be made good to the righteous. When they relinquish the earthly tabernacle, the scales of ignorance fall from their understandings; their will is wonderfully conformed to Christ's; every weight drops off from their affections; and their holiness is exceedingly confirmed: they are honoured with nearer approaches to God, they are favoured with clearer manifestations of his glory, they feel richer emanations of his love, and are more and more transformed into his image; every doubt vanishes, and they rejoice in the prospect, the assured and refreshing prospect of receiving all the fulness of their everlasting felicity. I said fulness, for though the felicity of the soul upon its dismissal from mortality is great, is high, is to us inconceivable; yet it will not be complete till the body is re-united to it, re-animated by it.---Then that will not only be rescued from corruption, but made like unto Christ's glorious body, will be dignified with divine approbation, and that before the largest assembly of men and angels; they will receive a crown of righteousness, they will sit on thrones and judge the apostate angels; they will then possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

What is said of the righteous may lead us to some proper conceptions with regard to the wicked and their state—the one is the reverse of the other; as they were quite dissimilar in their life, in their death they are equally different. If the righteous are committed to the care of benevolent angels, the wicked it is very probable are abandoned to the insults and rage of malevolent spirits. If the righteous are admitted into mansions of bliss, the wicked are consigned over to the places of horror and torment, where is all the misery which is expressed by weeping and
H h wailing;

wailing; all that self-condemnation and anguish, which is expressed by gnashing of teeth. If the righteous enjoy the calm of uninterrupted tranquillity, and the light of perpetual sun-shine; the wicked are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; wearied by their own ungovernable passions, stung by eager but unsatisfied desires, haunted by a stern upbraiding conscience. ---In a word, while the righteous are looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and their Saviour Jesus Christ; they are trembling under the dismal apprehensions of that dreadful day, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed in flaming fire.

I add only a remark on that text of St John, to which we are so much obliged in this inquiry, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, &c.*---The Lord must certainly signify, the Lord Jesus Christ.---To die in him, must, I think, imply dying in his faith, so as to be one with him; interested in his mercy, renewed by his Spirit, and conformed in some prevailing degree to his image. May this be the state of our souls, while we live here, and when we depart hence. Then that will be fulfilled to our unspeakable and eternal comfort, which is spoken by another apostle, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your's sincerely, &c.

L E T T E R L X.

Against mispending of time.

My dear friend,

Weston, Saturday Morn.

I Thought of you in a particular manner on Thursday, being the sad anniversary on which your late excellent lady resigned this life; and at the same time I thought on those tender lines,

Jamque

*Jamque dies, ni fallor, adest: quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum, sic Dii voluistis, habebo* *.

Virg. Æn. lib. 5.

I cannot but take notice of the wisdom and piety of my favourite poet, he teaches his hero to resolve all afflictive and dark dispensations, into the gracious will of God; and to derive his consolation from this belief. *Sic Dii voluistis*, is a sort of imitation of the good old priest Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*. It is not much unlike the exemplary acknowledgment of the patriarch Job, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!*

I am thankful for your present of *Vanierii Pradium Rusticum*. It is a very beautiful piece: *Uni Virgilio secundus*, the most elegant and correct Latin composition, that I have met with among the moderns.

I have no fault to find, and no alteration to offer, with regard to the little tract that you submit to my correction. ---But what shall I say, to my dear friend himself? Oh! what opportunities of doing good, substantial and immortal good, do you lose, do you squander away! opportunities, that are flying from you upon the swiftest wings of time; and when once gone, are never to be recovered.---I do not so much as think of your neglecting business; but do let the world see, that business may be managed, great business managed, and yet Christ and eternal ages not forgot. Let men see, that the comforts of Christianity, the privileges of the gospel, are so truly delightful, as to be the most effectual sovereign refreshment, under the fatigues of a burthenfome employ. Thus doing, you would be a credit and high recommendation to religion; and blessed would you be, if your Master, when he cometh, should find you so doing.---You will excuse my freedom; and in return, I

* The English of which is---“ Now the day, if I mistake not, is at hand, which (such has been the will of Heaven) I shall always account a day of sorrow, always a day to be honoured.”

will not cease to pray, that *the love of Christ may constrain you*, 2 Cor. v. 14.

I am,

Affectionately, and

Sincerely your's, &c.

L E T T E R LXI.

On courage for the cause of Christ.

Reverend and dear Sir,

Wexon, June 7. 1759.

DO not you take it amiss, that I have answered your last kind letter no sooner? I have such a multiplicity of epistolary engagements, and such a poor pittance of strength, that I cannot be so punctual in my acknowledgments, as my friends may expect, and as I myself wish.

You desired to see Mr Boyse's letter to me:—I here inclose it; and it should have been sent to you earlier, but I could not find it amidst the confused heap of my papers till yesterday.—I am very sorry to hear he is so ill, as there is little probability of expecting any thing further from his masterly pen.—I really think his little poem, intitl'd *Deity*, (in which he is not unmindful of the great Redeemer) is as useful and fine a piece of poetry as most in the English language. I so much admire it, that I have insensibly as it were got it by heart. God grant that it may be influential on every reader.

I was reading the other day a curious book written by Mr Fleming, and intitl'd, *The fulfilling of the scriptures complete*; in which I met with a valuable quotation from Luther's letter to Melancthon, who was then in much anguish on the apparent hazards of those times. "If this
" (says Luther) be the cause of God, and not of man, then
" all the burthen should be cast on him. Why dost thou
" afflict and torment thyself, seeing God hath given his
" Son for us?—Why do we tremble or fear? will he for-
" sake us in smaller things, who hath given us so great a
" gift?

" gift?---Is Satan stronger than God?---Should we fear
 " the world, which Christ has overcome? If the cause we
 " contend for be not the truth, let us change; but if the
 " cause be holy and just, why do we not credit the pro-
 " mise and faithfulness of God?---It is certain Satan can
 " reach no farther than this present life; but Christ reign-
 " eth for ever, under whose protection the truth now is,
 " he will not fail to be with us unto the end.---If he be
 " not with us, I beseech you tell me where he shall be
 " found? --If we be not of his church, do you think that
 " the bishop of Rome and our adversaries are of it? We
 " are indeed sinners, but Christ is true, whose cause we
 " have in hand; which he has hitherto maintained with-
 " out our counsel, and so he will do unto the end."---Mr
 Fleming then justly observes, that Luther rested on Christ,
 when all visible props broke under him.

What animating considerations are these under all the
 discouragements we may meet with in our ministerial la-
 bours?--How does the work of the Lord prosper in your
 hand? May you be in this respect as a fruitful bough by
 the wall; may your people sit under your shadow with
 great delight, and your fruit be sweet unto them!

I am,

Your's, &c.

L E T T E R LXII.

The following is a genuine copy of Mr Boyse's * letter to
 Mr Hervey.

The benefit of affliction exemplified.

Reverend and dear Sir,

FOR your tender admonitions and excellent advice, I
 am truly indebted to you; as they discover a generous
 and compassionate concern for my better part.—I bless God

* Mr Boyse died soon after he wrote this letter to Mr Hervey.

I have reason to hope, that great work is not to do; for of all the marks of infatuation I know amongst men, there can be none equal to that of trusting to a deathbed repentance.

I do not pretend to vindicate my own conduct—nor can I ever forget the very Christian sense of my condition and misfortunes which (notwithstanding all my misbehaviour) you have so pathetically expressed. The follies of my youth have furnished a plentiful harvest of reflection for my latter years; as I have been now for a long time in a manner buried from the world, so it has been my endeavour to spend that time in lamenting my past errors, and in pursuing a course of life void of offence towards God and man.

I have learnt to trust in God as my only portion, to bless him for his fatherly corrections, which have been much gentler than my demerit; and by which I have been taught to know him and myself; his infinite mercy and goodness, my own ingratitude and unworthiness; so that I may truly say with the returning prodigal, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son.*

My health is in a very precarious state; and the greatest hopes of recovery I have (which are very small) arise from warm weather and the country air.—I thank God I am absolutely resigned to his holy and blessed will. I have seen enough of the vanity and folly of earthly things, and how insufficient they are to satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. I am sensible of my own wretchedness and nothingness, and that my only hope of salvation is through that blessed Redeemer, who died to save lost sinners.—This is my rock of hope against an approaching eternity.

May you long, Sir, taste those true and unfading pleasures, which attend the practice of religion and virtue; and may you, by your shining example, be a means of turning many to righteousness. This is the sincere and ever grateful wish of

Your most obliged, and

Faithful servant, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R LXIII.

A sense of the love of Christ a strong consolation against the fear of death.

Dear Sir,

THE following is an extract of a letter, wrote by a young creature, labouring under an incurable distemper, and languishing in the near approaches of death.

"I am at this time more happy than tongue can express. —Never did I feel so much of the love of Christ shed abroad in my heart, as now. He has given me full assurance that he has out of love to my soul cast all my sins behind his back, (Is. xxxviii. 17.)—And oh! why need I fear death, when the sting is taken away?—No! though I am a sinner, yet I have an Advocate with the Father; and though while I continue in this vile body, I fear I shall too often grieve him, yet is his love still the same; which makes me abhor myself, that ever I should sin against so kind, so compassionate a Saviour."

See by **THIS** how the poor receive, how the poor believe, and how the poor adorn the gospel of God our Saviour. **THIS** has indeed no great authority to dignify it, no flowers of eloquence to recommend it; nothing but the transparent sincerity, and the native sublimity of its piety. It breathes however the very spirit which I long to attain; and though it comes from a person in low life, and of no education, yet I believe very few, even amongst the names of highest distinction for wit, genius, and learning, will be able in the same circumstances, to exercise the same magnanimity of mind.—

I am,

Your's, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R LXIV.

*Unbelief the reigning sin of the nation.**Dear Sir,**Weston-Favell, August 13. 1756.*

Yesterday I received the favour of your letter;—was surprised to find you so near me; and grieved to hear of the occasion. Oh! that both of us may be enabled to cast all our care upon the Almighty! for surely he who gave—not an arch-angel—not a world—but himself—his most blessed self for our sins—surely he careth for us.

Yes, dear Sir; I think from my very heart, that the grand controversy which the King of heaven has with our nation, is for our prevailing contempt of his most adorable Son Jesus Christ. A gift, compared with which every thing in earth or sky, is lighter than dust upon the scale. A gift, by which an omnipotent and eternal God not only demonstrates, but commands his love. Matchless then and unspeakable must it be!—See! how the prophet Isaiah exults and triumphs in this glorious gift. With an ardour of gratitude, and with a transport of delight, he cries; *To us a child is born, to us a son is given*; in whose person is a dignity, and in whose righteousness an efficacy, infinitely surpassing the power of thought. And should not such a gift be the darling topic of our conversation; be the avowed glory and the general joy of our nation? Yet strange to tell! afflictive to observe! this divinely excellent gift is forgot, is rejected, or treated with the most cold indifference. Where are the people, who mention it, or can bear to hear it mentioned in their company? Instead of being in raptures at the sound, are they not disgusted and chagrined?—And does not God behold all this? Did he ever receive so horrid an affront, or is it possible for his creatures to act a more contumelious and disdainful part?—But whither am I running?—Pardon me, dear Sir, pardon my full heart—my wounded heart—which has concurred to aggravate this crying iniquity.—O! that its invariable language, for the future, may be; God forbid, that I should glory,

glory, or rejoice, or confide, save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord: in him I have pardon of my sins; in him I have peace with God; in him I have eternal life. Therefore "him first, him last, him midst, and without end*," will I remember, acknowledge, celebrate.

Now you are come so far, could you not make a little farther excursion? Could not you favour us with your company at Weston? where you would find a plain house and a faithful heart open to receive you.-- I have no news from the literary world; and my orders to my bookseller are few.---But having occasion to write, not long ago, to Amsterdam, I sent for all my favourite author's works: Witſius I mean; the polite and pious Witſius.---My bookseller is reprinting, in two volumes, at my desire, Jenks's Meditations; which I propose to recommend by a prefatory address to the public.---Let me soon hear from you, if I cannot see you. And may your letter be in every sense an evangelist.

Ever your's, while, &c.

L E T T E R LXV.

The hope of glory a strong incitement to duty.

Dear Sir,

MR Hayward and Mr Pyke's *Cases of Conscience*, are printed in two volumes, the first of which I here send you. I return you Smollet's *History of England* with thanks. How empty all these polite pieces appear, compared with the sacred page! may this delight our taste, for this alone can comfort our heart.---What I proposed to write relating to the subject of visiting on Sundays, was executed the beginning of last week: yet, to say the truth, I am in some measure backward to propagate and enforce; because till people begin to taste something of the love of God, and find delight in Christ Jesus, such truths I doubt

* Mikon.

will only startle, and make them dread religion as burdensome.

--Thanks for the venison. We cannot dress it to-day. All my family are to be at court this morning: the King of heaven has sent positive orders, and will not excuse either man-servant or maid-servant.---Won't you give us your company in the afternoon? when Mr *** performs the whole service at my church, I fancy you will not be disappointed nor unedified; he seems to have a ready utterance, a very good voice, and a fervent zeal for the honour of Christ; may the arrow of the gospel go forth from his lips as the lightning!--I hope, you will bring your wife with you; such lively preaching as I expect, may be a blessing to both of you.---Oh! that Christ may guide us with his counsel, and warm us with his love--make us useful in our generation, and meet for his heavenly kingdom!

Why does our friend talk of not accepting ***, because it is a paltry living? surely he would not reckon that a paltry thing, which gave him an opportunity of preaching Christ, and winning souls. If he did, he would not be able to say, with a certain minister now in glory, *I seek not yours, but you.*---The blessed hope of that glory, is enough, is enough; Lord, strengthen it, brighten it, increase it, ever more and more.---Oh! that ministers may work for their dying Lord, while they have health; remembering, that sickness may confine them to their chamber, and death will imprison them in the grave.---God Almighty gives us courage, that we may fight the good fight of faith and prudence, that we may not dishonour our high calling; ere long eternity receives us, and then we rest from our labours; then we forget our transient toil, amidst innumerable ages of perfection, and glory, and joy.---For all this, not unto us, O Lord Jesus, not unto us, but unto thy love, thy righteousness, thy intercession, be the praise!

--What say you to my late well-meant admonition? You are not offended, I hope. We must be faithful to each other, or else how can we expect to meet with comfort, at the great tribunal; to meet with transport, amidst the angels of light?

--I have not heard from Biddiford; as soon as I receive information,

information, it shall be communicated to you.---And may the Lord fulfil that promise to us both; *I will inform thee, and teach thee, in the way wherein thou shalt go.*

...Pray have you got Dr Armstrong's poem on health? It is highly extolled by Mr Warton the translator of Virgil, as a most correct and (which with him seems to comprehend all excellency) a classical performance. I should like to peep upon it by way of amusement; for as to the blessing it celebrates, I expect it not, till this vile body is made like unto Christ's glorious body; blessed be God for this delightful hope; may it every day be brighter in you, and brighter in

Your most affectionate, &c.

L E T T E R LXVI.

On Christ's ability and willingness to save.

Dear—

THIS letter will come to your hands, as the blessings of the everlasting gospel are offered to our souls, without money and without price.

Be under no concern about the report you mention, it gives me not one moment's uneasiness; we have acted, I trust, as faithful stewards of our Master in heaven; and if he approves, how very insignificant is the censure of men! And what---ah what is a little misrepresentation, or a few lashes from tattling tongues, compared with those cruel mockings, which our divine and dying Redeemer bore!

You are, I find, as I too often am, in poor Peter's condition, when our Lord addressed him, with that tender rebuke, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*---Wherefore indeed do we doubt? Is he not an all-sufficient Saviour? Is not his death a complete atonement, sufficient to take away the sins of a whole world?---Is not his righteousness a perfect righteousness, able to justify even the most ungodly?---Does not his Godhead impart an infinite dignity to both? Rendering them more powerful to save,

than millions, unnumbered millions of sins are to destroy?

Is he not a willing Saviour?---How willing was Joseph to give the good of the land of Egypt to his aged father?---How willing was Jonathan to screen his beloved David from Saul's wrath?---How willing is an indulgent parent to deal out bread to his hungry child? Equally willing, abundantly more willing is Christ to give himself to our souls, to reconcile us to his almighty Father, to fit us for his kingdom, and take us to his glory.---A parent does not chuse to die for his child:---Jonathan never spilt his blood for David,--nor did Joseph lay down his life for that good old man Jacob. But this, all this, the Lord Jesus Christ freely undertook, freely underwent for us. What could he do more to assure us of his love!---Let us contemplate the story of his bitter, bitter passion. Let us view him prostrate in an agony of sorrow, on the cold ground; extended, with racking torture, on the accursed tree; laid all pale and mangled with wounds, in the gloomy sepulchre. And sure we shall have a stronger proof of Christ's willingness to save us, than the testimony of ten thousand ministers preaching on earth, or of ten thousand angels speaking from heaven.

Is he not a faithful Saviour? *Having loved his own, he loveth them even unto the end.* As his eyes never slumber, nor sleep, so his care for his people is never intermitted; he has written their names on the palms of his hands, and their eternal interests are ever before him; he will never, never, never leave nor forsake them; no, not in any circumstance, nor on any account. They are his peculiar treasure, and the ransom of his own dear life, they are the recompence for all his sufferings, and are to be the jewels in his mediatorial crown; they therefore shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand.—Neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate them from his love, from his bosom, from his heart.—*Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord? who is the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms,*
surely

surely then thou mayst dwell in safety, Deut. xxxiii. 27.
 &c.

Are we unworthy sinners? We readily own it, and oh! that we may deeply feel it! But did not Christ chuse to converse with publicans and sinners? Did he not come to seek and to save that which was lost?—The same Spirit which actuated him on earth, he retains now he is exalted into heaven; let not therefore our deplorable vileness be our hindrance, but our incitement to apply to the ever-gracious Friend of sinners.—Indeed, if we were not sinners, we should not be proper objects for the Saviour. *They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick*; for such he made his soul an offering, and for such he brought in everlasting righteousness; he makes intercession, not for the righteous, but for transgressors; and those that are afar off, in rebellion and apostacy, are brought nigh;—nigh to God, and home to heaven, by the blood of Christ.

May these considerations sink into our hearts, and be made the seed of a lively, growing, and joyful faith!—And *may the Lord direct us both* (as we both groan in this tabernacle, and are burdened) *into the love of God, and the patient waiting for of Jesus!* when this languishing, this corruptible body will lie down in peace, and rest in hope: and the soul delivered from every conflict, cleansed from every stain, will be for ever, for ever with the Lord.—Amen and Amen, says

Your's, &c.

L E T T E R LXVII.

On the excellency of the scriptures.

Weston-Favell, June 3. 1749.

SO, my dear Sir, the physicians upon the whole have given your friend no great hopes of a cure. — The apothecary's shop, the asses dugs, and the mineral waters, may, they apprehend, palliate the disorder; but that even a palliation, it seems, is not to be expected, without keep-
 ing

ing the mind quiet and chearful;—and that this important end may most effectually be answered, the doctors have recommended diversions, travelling, and company, giving a caution at the same time, I am told, against retirement, so much praying, and poring over religious books.

Now, if chearfulness be the grand, the fundamental, the only recipe adequate even to the mitigation of this disease, I may venture to assert, that such recipe is to be found (possibly what I declare may be wondered at) but I aver it is to be found in the Bible.—It may be seen wrote at length, and it well deserves consideration, in Prov. xvii. 22.

A merry heart doth good like a medicine : but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

That a satisfied, a serene, and chearful state of mind, will in this case be more beneficial than all manner of restoratives for decayed nature, or cordials for the sinking spirits, I can easily believe; nay, I am farther convinced, that whatever can be contrived by the most solicitous care of the physicians, will probably be rendered ineffectual, without this prime preparative, this most sovereign prescript.—It is indispensably necessary, that all possible endeavours should be exerted to have the thoughts calm, placid and easy.—Every thing must be sacrificed to this most desirable end.—Nothing can be more pernicious, in such circumstances, than the contrary situation of mind.—But here will arise a question, how this inward tranquillity may most easily be attained, and most surely established? By company, by travelling, by diversions, the doctors and some others will reply.—I am far, very far from being an enemy to diversions, when properly chose, and used with moderation. Travelling, may beguile the sense of woe, and palliate for a while the malady. Company, when chearful and improving, is an excellent source of comfort: when innocent only and entertaining, is of some present service, and ought to be allowed (at intervals) admittance. But these will no more reach the case now under consideration,—are no more able to create a settled tranquillity in the breast, than the gentle motions of a fan are sufficient to impel a wind-bound fleet. If they engross our time, and
leave

leave no leisure for nobler methods of consolation, they will certainly prove like heavy, lowering clouds, and instead of diffusing, will intercept the rays of heart-felt satisfaction. But what, may it be asked, would I substitute instead of these expedients?—I would beg leave (unpolite as it may seem, and in a manner exploded) to recommend prayer to God, and the daily reading of the scriptures.—If kind and friendly conversation be judged proper, why should prayer be disapproved?—Prayer is an humble, but delightful intercourse, with the best, the greatest, the everlasting Friend.—And has any earthly friend exercised more loving-kindness? Is any earthly friend more able to administer relief than the blessed God? If there be such friends, let them be our whole dependance, and let omnipotent goodness be secluded from any regard.

God has so loved us, that he gave his own Son, dearer to himself than all angels, and all worlds, to die for our salvation. Rather than we should perish for ever, he sent his infinitely glorious Son to take upon him our nature, and suffer the unknown agonies of crucifixion.—To shew his readiness to succour us in any distress, he styles himself *the Father of mercies, and God* (not of some, but) *of all comfort*, (2 Cor. i. 3.)—And where is the person, from whom we may more reasonably expect to receive tender and compassionate succours, than from this all-gracious God?—Is he not as powerful as he is gracious? What Job said of his companions, is, in a degree, true of every human aid: *impotent and miserable comforters are ye all*.—But the God of heaven is able to give songs in the night of distress; to make the bones, that sorrow and anguish have broken, to rejoice. If he speak peace, who shall cause disquietude, or what shall destroy our tranquillity?—Indeed if we apply for comfort, to any thing lower than Heaven, or by any such means as exclude frequent prayer, we neglect the fountain of living waters, and hew to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. The scriptures (and believe me, as I speak from daily experience) are a treasury of comfort.—One who had drank deep of the cup of sorrow declares, that *they rejoice the heart*;—and that for his own part, if his delight had not been in the

the divine law, he *should have perished in his trouble*, (see Bible, Psal. cxix. 92.)—*These things*, says the favourite disciple, *write we unto you*, (not barely that you may have joy, but), *that your joy may be full*, (John xv. 11.)—And St Paul adds, that *whatever things are written by the Spirit of inspiration, are written for our benefit; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope*, (Rom. xv. 4) that blessed hope of eternal life, which is an anchor to the soul, in all the storms of adversity; which is the oil of gladness, swimming above all the waves of affliction.—By having recourse to diversions and amusements, in preference to the strong consolations suggested in the Bible, we act as injudiciously, we shall be deceived as certainly, as if amidst the sultry heats of summer, we should seek cooling refreshment from a painted tree, and shun the embowering shady covert of a real grove.

If we are afflicted, the scriptures acquaint us, that our afflictions are the chastisements of a Father, not the scourges of an enemy. They give us assurance, that the all-disposing Providence will not suffer us to be afflicted, above what we are able to bear. (See 1 Cor. x. 13.)—That they shall turn to our good, and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness;—that they are light; are only for a moment, and yet shall work out for us a weight, an eternal weight of glory.—Can all the volumes of Heathen morality suggest, or all the recreations in the world afford, such rational and solid consolation?—Without these consolations, afflictions will be like a latent sore, smarting and rankling in the heart:—will produce discontent with our condition, and repining at Providence;—a melancholy temper, and a fretful carriage.—Trifling company, and worldly pleasures, will serve only to aggravate the misery, and make us inwardly mourn, that while others are in the elevations of mirth, we are pressed with a weight of calamity.—Whereas by means of these sovereign consolations, afflictions may be improved to the health of the mind, and become a most salutary expedient for furthering our spiritual happiness.

Can any thing be more (or equally) comfortable than the privileges recorded in that charter of our salvation,

the

the scriptures?—There we are told, that as many as truly believe in Jesus Christ, are children of the Almighty;—that the Lord who commandeth the waters, the glorious God who maketh the thunder, the everlasting King, who ruleth all things in heaven and earth, is their Father; he *pities them as a father pities his own children*, (Psal. ciii. 13.)—and that a mother may sooner forget her sucking child, than he can remit his tender care, for their present welfare and endless felicity, (Is. xlix. 15.)—That, because we are sinners, Christ Jesus, with infinitely more than parental tenderness, bore our sins, and expiated all our guilt, in his own bleeding body upon the tree, (1 Pet. ii. 24.)—Because we frequently offend, and always fail, our merciful high Priest ever liveth to make intercession for us, and to plead his divine merits in our behalf, (Heb. vii. 25.)—Because we have many corruptions within, and are assaulted by various temptations without, we have a promise of the blessed Spirit to subdue our corruptions, (Gal. iii. 14. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) and renew us after the image of him who created us, (Col. iii. 10.)—Because we are liable to manifold misfortunes, and visited with a variety of sorrows, the same holy Spirit is promised, under the amiable character of a *Comforter*, (John xv. 7. Luke xi. 13.)—Because all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof (the youth, the beauty, the wealth, all mortal accomplishments, and every worldly enjoyment) is withering, and transient as the flower of the field, Is. xl. 6. the scriptures direct our view, and consign over to our faith, a most incomparable, reversionary inheritance; an inheritance *reserved in heaven for us*, which is *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. i. 4.

Are these things, I would ask the physicians, likely to deject the mind, or oppress it with heaviness?—Need their patients fear an aggravation of distresses, from the offer, from the enjoyment of such blessings?—Much more reasonably might the bleeding wound, fly from the lenient hand, dread the healing balm, and court its cure from the viper's envenomed tooth.—Have these truths a tendency to engender gloomy apprehensions, as the medical gentlemen are too apt to imagine, or do these increase the load which

galls an afflicted mind?—Rather, what heart (that attends to, and believes such glad tidings) can forbear even leaping for joy? These are calculated to put off our sackcloth, and gird us with gladness; are enough to turn the groans of grief, into the songs of gratitude.

Cheared by these reviving considerations, supported by this blessed hope, the ancient Christians were more than conquerors over all their calamities; they even gloried in tribulations, because they were the appointed way to the kingdom of heaven, Acts xiv. 22. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had, in the world above, a better and more enduring substance, Heb. x. 34.—They perceived with complacency, the decay of their earthly tabernacle; because there remained for them, after their dissolution, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1.—Perhaps we may not arrive at such heights of heroic and triumphant exultation, but surely we should try those remedies, which in their case were so surprisingly and happily successful.

Upon the whole; a peaceful composure of mind, and calm resignation to the all-wise will of God;—a holy joy in the merits of our ever-blessed Redeemer, and a well-grounded hope of unutterable and immortal bliss, in a better world; these, these are more absolutely needful for a case like this, and will do more towards relief, than all the drugs that nature produces.—And very sure I am, that these noble anodines are dispensed no where but in the scriptures; are to be procured no otherwise than by prayer.—Other methods may stupify for a moment, but will not remove the pain, much less introduce permanent ease.

I speak not this from mere speculation, or conjectural probability.—I have myself EXPERIENCED the efficacy of the preceding expedients for these desirable purposes.—Having been a sort of *Veteran* in affliction, I have been under a necessity of applying these consolations; and have the utmost reason to bear witness, that there are none like them.—The scriptures are the treasury of joy and peace, and the truly religious are generally the most uniformly chearful.

If you apprehend what I have here advanced on the means of obtaining true chearfulness and solid peace of mind, may be in any measure instrumental to the comfort of your friend, you would do well perhaps to communicate it, as I presume you are not ashamed of appearing in the recommendation of the Bible — The physicians would probably sneer at such sort of advice, but the arguments will not be the less valid on that account;—and if their patient be seriously disposed, such sneers would have little or no effect.

Do you recollect Dr Young's lines in the eighth night?

—Would'st thou not laugh,
This counsel strange, should I presume to give?
*Retire, and read thy Bible, to be gay,
There truths abound of sov'reign aid to peace?*
But these thou think'st are gloomy paths of joy:
*False joys indeed are born for want of thought;
True joys from thought's full bent and energy:*
And this demands a mind in equal poize,
Remote from gloomy grief and glaring joy;
Much joy not only speaks small happiness;
But happiness, that shortly must expire:
Can joy unbottom'd in reflection stand?
Can such a joy, meet accidents unshock'd?
Or talk with threat'ning death, and not turn pale?

Though my letter is much longer than I at first intended, and stands in need of an apology for its prolixity, I cannot conclude without giving you a fresh assurance, that amongst the great number of those who esteem and respect you, there is not one of them who more sincerely regards you than, good Sir,

Your most obedient, and

very humble servant, &c.

L E T T E R LXVIII.

*How controversy should be managed.**My dear friend,**Weston-Favell, Dec. 15. 1753.*

I Return you my best thanks for sending me a copy of so smart and sensible a letter, which came to me very apropos; and which I think is so likely to do good in this disputatious age, that I wish it was printed in some of the magazines and public papers.—I am much obliged to you for your kind caution against my being drawn into a controversy, particularly by the very warm and overbearing Mr ***, who is now grown impatient of the least contradiction, and far from being a desirable companion, or correspondent.

Controversy is as much my aversion as it can be your's; for where that begins, religion too often ends; and I shall not enter the lists I promise you with any one, unless I am absolutely necessitated to it: but if I am compelled to appear in print on such an occasion, I shall endeavour to pay due regard to Solomon's excellent advice, *viz. A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger*, Prov. xv. 1.—Instead of exasperating my adversary by cutting reprehensions, I will, if possible, constrain him by a candid and respectful treatment to moderate his temper; and by a coercive propriety of arguments, persuade him to relinquish such tenets, as I think erroneous.

God grant that I may never behave with an indecent resentment, how great soever may be the provocation of my gainfayers; but that in all my writings and conversations I may avoid the hasty spirit, lest I injure my own peace of mind, and disgrace my profession as a Christian and a minister.

It is a rule with me, always to speak well of the good qualities even of bad men, especially when others are censuring them with an unmerciful severity;—and I could wish that every controversialist would learn so much candour, as to put the best construction on his opponent's book, and to embrace

embrace what was in general good in it, however he might doubt or censure some particular opinions of the contending author.

To live peaceably with all men is my earnest desire and my daily prayer; and in order to do this, I am more and more convinced of the necessity of candour, humility, and a conscientious regard to the example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I am, my dear friend,

Affectionately and inviolably your's, &c.

A copy of the letter above-mentioned.

Dear Sir,

I Have a strong and settled aversion to all manner of dispute, in things that relate to a message of perfect peace and love. The kingdom of God is no more opinion, than it is meat and drink—and argumentation can have little to do where a new heart, and a right spirit, is the business, or work to be performed.

If we prevail in our disputes, (though I believe there is not a single instance in which either of the antagonists ever condescended publicly to own himself in the wrong), our adversaries then become baffled worldlings:—if they prevail, then they become worldlings triumphant.—When we deal much in disputes, we soil our souls, and endanger the temper of meekness and love, which we are so frequently enjoined to cultivate, and which are the very badge of Christianity.

As for amicable disputes in religion, it is as errant cant as an amicable suit at law.—A dispute about the sacrament, as naturally removes the mind out of its state of perfect charity, as a quarrel about a whore.—The subject alters nothing, it is the temper of mind wherewith we handle these matters, that defile the man; and it is morally impossible to meddle to any purpose, without having the mind disordered.

St Paul was plainly of the same opinion, when he wrote
thus

thus to Timothy; *If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.* 1 Tim. vi. 3. 4. 5.

This is the constant case of all the disputes in the gospel itself.—The more they argued, the further they were always from the point; insomuch that even those who are said to believe on Christ, at the beginning of the chapter of dispute, before the end of it take up stones to cast at him.

In short, till a man be a Christian in some measure, he has neither ability, nor any right in nature to talk about it—It is more absurd than a controversy between a fish and a fowl, about the best and most commodious element to breathe in.

The peace and purity of our own minds, is of more value than of every other endowment.—For my own part, I had rather be able to bear patiently the nick-name of fool or madman, than to become famous for all the wisdom and prudence which the world knows how to commend and esteem.

In this poverty of spirit, I would heartily intreat all my friends, earnestly to seek after that love and peace, which is only to be found in the face or similitude of our dear Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.—The want of this most amiable and Christian disposition in some eminent professors, for I never admired a rough and boisterous zeal, has often startled and chagrined him who is, dear Sir,

Your's very sincerely, J. S.

P. S. We may talk what we will about religion, it is nothing less than a divine temper.—What is short of this is PRATING about religion, and that is all.—I meet with many doctrinal Christians, who are very dabs a chapter and verse, and yet very bond-slaves to earth and self.—Spiritual

ual Christians (which are the only true ones) are almost as scarce as phoenixes.

L E T T E R LXIX.

A caution against the fear of man.

My dear friend,

Saturday Morning.

LET me exhort you to live as on the borders of eternity, and often to reflect where the late fall from your horse might have hurried you. Eternity is at hand,—he that cometh will come, and will not tarry,—oh that your soul may prosper, for without that, what are all the riches, pleasures, and honours of this earth! but it cannot prosper, unless the world be under foot, and your affections fixed on Jesus. What besides him, my dear friend, deserves a thought? And how tenderly has he dealt with us, notwithstanding all our ingratitude and provocations? I can say no more than I have said to you; but I pity you, and I pray for you, that you may conquer this fear of man:—I wish you would every day for the next month, read some part of professor Franck's *Nicodemus*, or *The fear of man*. Dr *** told me he had a great regard for you, and wished you would set your face as a flint; exert your lively talents to promote the gospel, and confess the Lord Jesus boldly before men on every proper occasion: and when they talk obscenely, or take the Lord's name in vain, you ought genteelly to reprove them, or leave the company: this would be acting like a Christian!—But while you are thus silent, meally-mouthed, stand so much upon your politeness, and have such a fear of being censured by worldly-minded people, you may take my word for it, you will do very little good, and be a stranger to the comfort and peace, which others, who stick closer to Christ, daily experience;—that comfortable peace of God, which (as Archbishop Secker finely observes, page 132. of his nine sermons) is that sense of being in friendship with him, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him which passeth all understanding; exceeds the conception of those who have

have not experienced it, and will exceed hereafter the present conceptions of those who have. Adieu, my dear friend.—Think well on what the Archbishop has so pathetically described, and then meditate on this alarming text, and reconcile it with your own pusillanimous conduct, which you miscall prudence; *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels*, Mark viii. 38.—Once more adieu!—Remember that this is the declaration of the Lord who bought us with his blood, and suffered the unknown agonies of crucifixion to save you, and

Your's very sincerely, &c.

P. S. When people come to visit me, they expect to hear of Christ; and few come to Weston, but those to whom such discourse is agreeable; nor do I desire the company of any others.—Talking of Christ is my touchstone, to see whether a person is worth my acquaintance.—If you was once to take this method, you will tell me, perhaps, that such and such a one will abuse you, and all the principal gentlemen will ridicule and forsake you.—And what then?—You are much better without them.—In their stead you will have the esteem and friendship of those who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity; and Christ himself will be in the midst, who has laid up for you and all such as love his appearing, a crown of righteousness.—Has this consideration no weight with my dear friend?—Do not let me apply to you what St Paul says of Demas to Timothy, chap. iv. 10. *Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.* Read the cxixth Psalm, and see whether you, and your worldly-wise company, have the spirit of the psalmist—he, though a king, delighted to talk of God.—He not only talked of him observe, but *delighted to do it*; and it was pain and grief* to him to forbear.

* See Psal. xxxix. 3.

L E T T E R LXX.

Why many learned men treat religion with indifference.

Dear Sir, Saturday Morning.

IN reply to your question, "Why so many learned and very clever men in all worldly affairs, should treat religion with so much indifference, and remain unaffected by every argument that can be urged to rouse them from such a state of delusion," I send you my opinion in a few words, viz. "Because they do not pray for the assistance of the holy Spirit."—And I send you an answer more at large, extracted from a book of the celebrated Dr Bates's, which I was lately reading, intitled, *The sovereign and final happiness of man, with the effectual means to obtain it.*

"The efficacious influence," says the doctor, "of the holy Spirit, is requisite to change the WILL, that with a free and full consent, OUR WILL may desire and prosecute the spiritual, eternal good.—Without this, the conviction of the mind is not powerful enough to convert the soul from the love of the world to chuse heaven. —There may be an enlightened conscience, without a renewed heart. Though the JUDGMENT assents that God is the supreme good; yet till the heart be circumcised, and the sensuality of the affections taken away, divine love (which directs our life to God as our blessed end) can never possess it.

"If men had a sensible and strong assurance of the eternal state hereafter; if all those who lived godly in a visible manner ascended with Elias to heaven; and if all who continued in their sins visibly descended into hell,

* See Christ's own words, Luke xi. 13.—which the generality of mankind disregard: no wonder then the world should lie so much in darkness, and be thus dead to vital religion.

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“ (as Corah and his company were swallowed up alive by
 “ the earth before the Israelites); if men could hear the
 “ joyful exultations of the saints above, and their high
 “ praises of God; then hear the desperate cries and deep
 “ complaints of the damned; nay, if one according to the
 “ desire of the rich man was sent from the doleful regions
 “ below, and with his fiery tongue should preach a sermon
 “ on those torments, not describing them at a distance,
 “ but by a sensible demonstration in himself, yet THIS
 “ ALONE would not be sufficient to draw off mens hearts
 “ from the *deceitful* and transitory happiness of this world,
 “ and to fasten them on the *perfect* and *eternal* happiness
 “ in the next. Indeed, they could not then indulge their
 “ vices so securely, but yet they would be *strangers to the*
 “ *life of God*, such an inveterate alienation of heart is in
 “ men from *real* holiness; for till the quickening Spirit
 “ of God (by a directing persuasive light, that represents
 “ the truth and goodness of spiritual things) transforms the
 “ soul, and makes it spiritual in its valuations, and affec-
 “ tions, it is *inwardly averse* from grace and glory.

“ How earnestly therefore ought we all to pray, that
 “ this holy Spirit *may direct our hearts to the love of God,*
 “ *and to the patient waiting for of Christ Jesus, when he shall*
 “ *come to be glorified in his faithful servants, and admired in*
 “ *all them that believe.*”

In another place † Dr Bates expresses himself in these very
 momentous

* Holiness is a divine principle, without the *sincere preva-*
lence of which, *no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14.---It
 is the great end of the gospel, as well as the law, to promote
 and advance which, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and
 his holy Spirit, has been revealed and imputed to us.

† Dr Bates of Emmanuel, and afterwards of King's college
 Cambridge, and chaplain to King Charles II. is universally al-
 lowed to have been a man of strong natural parts, of great ac-
 quired learning, of most exemplary candour and moderation.---
 Such a vivacity of imagination as his, and such a solidity and
 depth of judgment, rarely meet together.---He is well known
 for the exactness and propriety of his method, and the clear-
 ness

momentous terms: "Worldly men, when death is near, are not so much affected with the loss of the crown of glory, and the kingdom of heaven, as with their leaving the present world, and its vanities:—This makes death intolerably bitter.—In short, till the love of God inflames and purifies the heart, the fruition of his glory is not esteemed nor desired*.

Your question will be still further answered by considering thoroughly two tracts, wrote by Professor Franck: one of which is intitled, *A short introduction to the practice of the Christian religion*, and the other is intitled, *Nicodemus*, or, *A treatise against the fear of man*: wherein the causes and sad effects thereof are briefly described, with some remedies against it, price one shilling,—dedicated to the honourable society for reformation of manners.

And now having mentioned Professor Franck, and his nefs and delicacy of his stile; insomuch, that he was by many accounted the Cicero of his time, and therefore called *the silver-tongued Bates*.---The whole works of this elegant author have lately been reprinted in folio; but it is much to be wished, that some of his little pieces were to be published separately, as they were formerly; especially, his inestimable little treatise on the four last things, (*viz.* death, judgment, heaven, and hell), in which truth speaks with such authority, persuasion, and efficacy, as constrains the reader to lay his hand on his heart, and most sensibly feel that he has a soul and conscience, though he had hitherto lived as if he had neither.---A farther account of Dr Bates may be found in the *Biographia Britannica*, amongst the lives of eminent men.

* A writer of later date has expressed himself much to the same purpose.---But as life is the gift of God, and as that is the time for our doing good, and honouring our Creator and Saviour, the words *foolish fondness for life* are perhaps objectionable.

"Nothing but a foolish fondness for life, which if its evils did not cure, one would think the near prospect of heaven might; or else a doubt as to our title to the promised reward (which should double our diligence to secure that title) can make any one loth to die, who heartily believes in God, and his Son our Saviour Jesus."

treatise against the fear of man, I cannot conclude without observing, that I think him one of the most eminent Christians, and most extraordinary men I ever heard of, as his *Pietas Hallensis*, which I read with admiration and deep humility, sufficiently demonstrates; and had I been a member of the society for reformation of manners, when the dedication of his *Nicodemus* had been presented to them, I should have made a motion to have had an hundred pounds expended in a proper distribution of that most important book, as there can be no material reformation, till the fear of man is removed; and as nothing can be better calculated to extirpate such fear, and promote all the other laudable ends of the society.

I am, dear Sir, your's, &c.

P. S. The title of the book I recommended to your son, please to tell him, was *Henry's pleasantness of a religious life*. The author designed it particularly for young people; and in my conversation with them, I generally mention it; indeed, I am the more solicitous of having it put into their hands, as they are too apt to look upon religion in a gloomy view, considering it as destructive of every enjoyment.

L E T T E R LXXI.

Caution against judging of mens states.

Dear Sir,

Friday Morn.

YOU ask me what I think of you, in case it should please God to take you out of the world, in the perplexed state you have described to me.—An answer to such a question, is much more difficult than you seem to be aware of; and therefore, I must beg leave to decline passing any sentence.—We ministers are to teach, warn, comfort, and exhort every man, according to God's most holy word—but after death comes the judgment on each of us. For alas! how little, how very little do we know of one another, or of ourselves? The most amazing, perhaps, and

one

one of the most humbling considerations too, which can well be offered to the human mind, is that, though we cannot form a tolerable judgment of any man's real condition, yet *God shall judge the world, the whole world in equity*; not so much as one single case, how intricate soever it may seem to us, will he mistake—he was, is, and ever shall be omniscient and omnipresent.—And yet, short-sighted creatures as we are, how often do we usurp this prerogative, and presume to judge our fellow-creatures. A certain author, whose name I forgot, (though I registered to the following effect from him in one of my old diaries), has observed, “That it is impossible for us mortals to form an equitable judgment of the state of any one individual; because God alone knows all the circumstances he has been, and now is in.—He alone can be the proper judge of his abilities and powers—what opportunities he had of improving himself and of doing good—what were the force of his temptations—what difficulties he had to struggle with—what portion of divine grace was given to him—what natural understanding he had—what acquired knowledge was or could be obtained by him—and, in short, what the true state of his case was.—Nor will he condemn any one unjustly or arbitrarily.—How comfortable a reflection is this! especially to one who is cruelly persecuted, or unjustly censured—that *God shall judge the world in equity*—and yet,—what a tremendous thought is it, that every day we live we provoke this Judge of all men, and increase our heap of sin—which swells into such a frightful size, such a stupendous mountain of guilt, as will make us one day stand amazed at the sight of it!—But what art thou, O thou great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, *Zech. iv, 7.*—We have an Advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ the righteous*, and he is the propitiation for our sins.—Oh! that I may have a devout and lively faith in him, as it is by him alone my sins can be cancelled. May the cry of his blood drown their clamour.—We are, most just God, the children of thy wrath, and he is the Son of thy love, who died to save us, and through whom thou art willing to receive us.—Yet what a distrustful fainting of mind comes over

“ me,

“ me, on the remembrance of former transgressions, which
 “ neither a reflection on God’s ineffable goodness, nor on
 “ the unbounded value of the sacrifice of Christ, can effec-
 “ tually relieve?—Hear me, O Lord God, in this my hour
 “ of heart-felt distress, nor take thou vengeance of my sins:
 “ spare thy creature, O Lord, spare him, whom thou hast
 “ redeemed with thy most precious blood; let thy mighty
 “ Spirit fit me for mercy and acceptance, and be not, oh!
 “ be not angry with me for ever.”

With this prose quotation, I send you a copy of verses on the renovation of a sinner; which will, perhaps, at this time, be neither unacceptable nor unseasonable.—It was wrote by a very particular friend of mine, and is as poetical as it is instructive and consolatory.

I.

WHEN with my mind devoutly press’d,
 Dear Saviour! my revolving breast.
 Would past offences trace;
 Trembling I make the black review,
 Yet pleas’d behold, admiring too,
 The pow’r of changing grace.

II.

This *tongue*, with blasphemies defil’d,
 These *feet*, to erring paths beguil’d,
 In heav’nly league agree;
 Who would believe such *lips* could praise,
 Or think my dark and winding ways
 Should ever lead to thee?

III.

These *eyes*, that once abus’d their sight,
 Now lift, to thee their wat’ry light,
 And weep a silent flood;
 These *hands* ascend in ceaseless pray’r,
 Oh! wash away the stains they wear,
 In pure, redeeming blood!

IV.

These *ears*, that pleas’d could entertain
 The midnight oath, the lustful strain,

When

When round the festal board ;
 Now deaf to all th' enchanting noise,
 Avoid the throng, detest the joys,
 And long to hear thy word.

V.

Thus art thou serv'd, in ev'ry part :
 Oh! wouldst thou but transform my *heart*,
 That drossy thing refine ;
 That *grace* might *nature's* strength controul,
 And a new creature,—body, soul,
 Be *all*—be ever thine.

I transcribed these verses, as I hope you will commit them to your memory ; and often repeat them as you ride or walk, till your tongue, lips, eyes, ears, and very heart, are subservient to the great end of your salvation, and that of others.—Exert yourself,—be of good cheer, the clouds that darken the face of your affairs, will ere long disperse. He that gave his blood for you, and refused not to bear the racking agonies of the cross for you,—he will not leave you, nor forsake you. God, who is faithful and just, has promised to forgive us our sins through the mediation of his Son.—*Lord, I believe this, help thou our unbelief.* So wishes, and so prays,

Your's very sincerely, &c.

L E T T E R LXXII.

Against excessive sorrow.

My dear friend,

Weston-Favell, Dec. 5. 1747.

I Assure you, I am extremely concerned for the death of your most excellent wife, as indeed, indeed I think she has left few equals behind her.—“ Take her all in all, I shall never see her like again *.”—But, my dear friend, you must not give way to excessive sorrow—all proper allowances I tenderly do and ought to make, as such will be

* Shakespear's Hamlet,

made both by God and man; but yet our sorrows must not be immoderate, or inconsistent with the will of God, and resignation to his providence.—Give me leave to present you with, and recommend to you on this melancholy occasion, a repeated perusal of Dr Grosvenor's *mourner*, or, *the afflicted relieved*.—It is a most valuable gem, and as it is wrote in numbers like the Spectators, it will not weary your attention. I am sure you stand in need of the consolations and helps there suggested; I am never without some of these little books to give away to my acquaintance under affliction, especially for the loss of dear relations or valuable friends; I think it, for these purposes, one of the most judicious and universally useful books extant, and it well deserves to be translated into the language of every nation where Christianity is professed.

Do not you often recollect in this season of distress, the discourse, the prayers, the amiable, the rejoicing, and the heavenly spirit of our dear friend, who was with us last month? Blessed be God for making him such a lovely example, and such a zealous promoter of pure and undefiled religion.—Blessed be God for promising us the same divine Spirit; and giving us the same glorious hopes, which have had such a quickening and ennobling influence on his heart.—The rich goodness of the Lord exercised to others, should encourage our expectations, should strengthen our faith.—Let it then, let it be so.—Adieu! my dear friend!—I will come to you again very soon.—In the mean time I shall not cease to pray for you, as I am with great compassion and great esteem,

Most tenderly, most sincerely your's, &c.

L E T T E R LXXIII.

Against despair.

Dear Sir,

I Should be glad to suggest any thing, either for your improvement or consolation.—But what can I suggest, while

while you entertain such hard thoughts of Christ, and will not be persuaded out of this strange notion, "that the curse of God has lighted on you, and will follow you to the grave." Such a thought (and it must be taken up without any real foundation) not only renders you extremely miserable, but will blast all your future usefulness.—Suppose you had rebelled against God, even in a more extraordinary degree than even your own imagination can paint; and suppose you was rejected by him at the present, yet what says the apostle St James, chap. iv. 10. *Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

As to the quotation from Mr ***'s letter to you, wherein he observes with a kind of triumphant malignity, "that the devil had taken an advantage of you. in relation to some imprudent management in the affair, at ***, &c. &c. &c. and dragged you, as he expresses it, through a horse-pond, dirtied and wet to the great diversion of the spectators." I ask, Of what spectators? Of the worldly-minded only, and the envious, to whom your former flourishing state as a first rate Christian, was a constant and visible reproach; yet Christ (though you are now thus depressed) is still your friend, and will break Satan's teeth; and though dirty, will cleanse you; though wet, will receive and warm you.

Now let me put a question to you—Would you reject your child, because, when dressed in its best cloaths, he had met with a like misfortune?—Or suppose he had rambled out in the snow, and scratched himself with briars, and came to you bleeding and cold, would you turn him out of doors, when he claimed your pity?—We do not know Christ well enough!—How kind! how good he is to us!—What is my kindness and compassion for you (on which you seem to place so high a value) in comparison of Christ's?—Have I been nailed to the cross for you?—Oh pray earnestly to HIM, for

—————To HIM, to HIM, 'tis giv'n,
Passion and care and anguish to destroy,
M m

Thro'

Thro' HIM soft peace and plenitude of joy
 Perpetual o'er the world redeem'd shall flow.

Prior's Solomon.

He has satisfied God for all your sins—he is your Advocate—and has procured for you the inestimable gift of the holy Spirit to subdue your iniquities.—Cultivate the love of God in your heart, and he will make your path of duty plain before you. I dare say, God will make you more abundantly useful than ever; oh bring your mind off from this destructive notion, “that the curse of God follows you.”—This is a suggestion of Satan's to prevent your usefulness—but remember that text, *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations*, 2 Pet. ii. 9. and he will certainly deliver you out of this, and restore you to his wonted favour.

Do not select such terrifying texts for your meditation, as in your letter you tell me you have done.—It is as improper as if you should eat the coldest melon, or use the most slight covering, when shivering with an ague. Chuse the morning after you receive this letter (by way of antidote to the texts of your own selecting) the following for your meditation; *His mercy is greater than the heavens*, Psal. cviii. 4. *His mercy endureth for ever*, Psal. cxviii. 1. Put together these two expressions, and see whether they do not amount to more than either your imprudences, or your distress.—You have to be sure done amiss, and dealt foolishly in the matter of ***, God forbid I should justify your conduct;—but oh let it not be said, let it not be once surmised, that it is beyond the reach of God's unmeasurable goodness to pardon, or of Christ's immensely rich merits to expiate. The Lord loves you with an everlasting love; and take if you please the latter part of the xxxth of Isaiah, vers. 18. for your contemplation; the words are, *For the Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are they that wait for him.*

None can tell, none can think, what mercy there is with the Lord; with inconceivable tenderness his bowels yearn towards the weakest, frailest believer in his dear Son—We have dishonoured his holiness, and violated his law; but
 let

let us not, to accumulate our follies, derogate from the boundless riches of his mercy in Jesus Christ, to all those who seek and intreat it.—There is a wide difference between humiliation and despair.—Draw near to Christ with an humble boldness.

May you see many, many years on earth; and when the earth shall be no more, may you be received into the new Jerusalem; where dwelleth righteousness, consummate righteousness, and everlasting happiness.—This, my dear Sir, is my earnest wish and fervent prayer for you, and for myself, who am, with great compassion and true regard,

Your obliged humble servant and friend, &c.

P. S. My favourite author *Liborius Zimmermannus*, whispers to me on this occasion the following passage: *Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst BELIEVE, thou shouldst SEE the glory of God*, and experience his goodness, when least deserved, or rather notoriously forfeited. Hence may we be convinced, that his loving-kindness is unbounded, is unwearied, is infinite; as much surpassing all our follies and all our thoughts, as the world of waters exceeds the drop of a bucket.—Oh for a spirit of steady faith, to live under the continual belief of this precious, precious truth.

L E T T E R LXXIV.

Some thoughts on a book, intituled, Letters on Theron and Aspasio.

Madam,

Weston-Favell, Sept. 4. 1758.

BE so good as to present my very affectionate compliments to your excellent friend Mr Kennedy. Inform him, that my intended work has for a long season, on account of my great infirmities, been like the sun in Gibeon, and like the moon in the valley of Ajalon. I shall be particularly pleased and thankful to receive his thoughts on that important subject, the assurance of faith. Mine are much

the same as Mr Ebenezer Erskine's in his valuable sermons, and as Mr Boston's in his most judicious notes on *The marrow of modern divinity*.

Pray, Madam, favour me with a long extract from Mr Kennedy's * letter; I do assure you, I admire his writings, they have a beauty which is quite natural and artless; joined with a piety, which is very affecting and edifying.

A book has lately appeared, in two small volumes, intitled, *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*. I cannot say I would recommend it to your perusal, but I should be glad, if you would mention it in some conversation with your learned and devout visitants, in order to know their opinion. For my own part, I hardly can tell what opinion to form. The author conceals his name, and it seems difficult to discover his principles or his aim. Some things are excellent, written with spirit, and in a strain truly evangelical; in some things I stand corrected by him, I kiss the rod, and, far from being displeased, am thankful for his animadversions; though in some instances, he has acted a disingenuous part, not consulting the most correct edition of my book, not adverting to my own explanation of my meaning, and making me approve the whole of a person's works †, where I only commend some particular part.

But

* Mr Kennedy, who Mr Hervey so highly and justly respected, is minister at the Scots church in Rotterdam.

In the last letter Mrs C—— received from Mr Hervey are these words: “I received yours, with good Mr Kennedy's letter inclosed. It speaks the very sentiments of my heart, much better than my own tongue or pen could express them. I do not perceive a single sentence, to which I should make any objection. With other believers in Jesus Christ, I would be of one heart, but with Mr Kennedy I have the pleasure to be of one mind.---I beg you to present my most affectionate respects to the worthy writer, and desire him to give us a continuation of his thoughts.”

† Mr Hervey did not think himself under an obligation to defend every particular sentiment of an author, whose treatise he might approve in general.---And here it may be proper to observe, that his own candour, and the frequent solicitations

of

But what gives me the greatest disgust, and will, I believe, offend every candid reader, is, a bitter vein of contempt and invective against some of the best of men that ever lived, and some of the best authors that ever wrote. I once thought the apostle James's question implied an impossibility: but it seems to be reduced to real fact by the pen of this critic, and in the *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*, where the *fountain sends forth* at the same place, in the same performance, *sweet water and bitter*.

I hope you will not act with Mr Kennedy according to the exact rules of retaliation; but though he has been slow to write, you will be swift to answer, that he may the more speedily improve and delight yourself, Madam, and

Your very humble servant, &c.

L E T T E R LXXV.

On giving a rose to a lady.

Dear Sir,

Weston-Favell, Nov. 4. 1757.

YOU wonder at my delay in answering your very friendly letter: this is the true cause. When I received your favour, I was very busy, in dispatching to the press my three last-sermons, lately published. By some accident your letter was mislaid, and could not be found. This day it came to light, and, the moment I looked upon the date, it struck me with a painful regret, a regret almost equal to the pleasure I enjoyed, in your edifying conversation.

Your lady has shewn the most welcome complaisance to me, and to the * rose; to me, in accepting what is less than

a

of others, induced him to be more indulgent than he ought, and to give rather too favourable an opinion. For which he has been misrepresented by the artful, and abused by the malevolent.

* When this gentleman was at Weston, Mr Hervey (as he walked with him in the garden) plucked a rose, and desired him

a trifle; to the rose, in putting it to such a use. Could that poor vegetable be sensible, it would rejoice to be a remembrancer of its most amiable Creator. The prophet calls upon the whole creation, inanimate as it is, to exult and triumph in the grace of our incarnate God. *Sing, O heavens; be joyful, O earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forests, and every tree*, whether cultivated or wild; *for the Lord*, by his incarnation, blood, and righteousness, *has redeemed Israel, and glorified himself*, most magnificently displayed all his divine perfections, *in the salvation of Jacob*.

I heartily wish, that Mrs ** may become, every day, more and more acquainted with the Rose of Sharon; that his loveliness, riches, and glory, may be revealed in her heart, by the Holy Ghost. Happy the souls, in which this flower of heaven blossoms; which are charmed with its beauty, and refreshed with its odours. Their happiness will not fade as a leaf, but like the merit and mercy of their Lord, will be new every morning; new every moment, new through eternal ages.

I wish I could gratify your benevolent temper, by giving you a comfortable account of my health. But nothing administered for its succour and restoration, succeeds. It seems to be the will of our great Physician, that my strength should be labour and sorrow. May his holy will be done; only may my faith in his blood be strong, and my love of his name be warm. Then I shall meet you, ere long, amidst the innumerable company of angels, and no more complain, *My head, my head; no more say, I am sick*.

How shall I recompense my generous doctor, for prescribing without a fee? By wishing, that he may never want the aid, which he so kindly tenders to, his

Affectionate friend, and

brother in Christ, &c.

him to present it to his wife, to put her in mind of the Rose of Sharon. She paid that regard to the giver and the gift, as to put it into a frame with a glass.

L E T T E R LXXVI.

On the comforts that attend religion.

Madam,

Weston-Favell, Feb. 22. 1758.

I Received the favour of your letter, and found no small pleasure in perusing its contents. It gave me a singular satisfaction, to see a lady of such fine sense, and in the very bloom of life, mindful of the things which belong to her eternal peace. May this happy disposition increase with your increasing years! and it will be the greatest blessing that you can enjoy, or your correspondent wish.

If my writings have afforded you any entertainment, or been the means of administering the least improvement, I desire to adore and bless the all-gracious God. For he, Madam, teaches to profit; his Spirit commands success; and all our good comes wholly from his heavenly benediction.

I am pleased to find this, among your other valuable expressions; "I want to have all those heavenly consolations."—You consider religion in a right view. It is not a vexatious burthen, or an irksome task; but it is intended to be the comfort of our lives, and the joy of our hearts. God is *the God of all comfort*, Christ is styled *the Consolation of Israel*, and the Holy Ghost is called *the Comforter*.—The gospel is the most comfortable report imaginable; it is glad tidings, and the joyful sound; it assures poor sinners, that God has laid all their iniquities, both great and small, on his beloved Son; that Jesus Christ has brought in a most perfect and everlasting righteousness, whereby they may be justified; and that our first, our great, our leading duty is, to believe all this, in our own behalf, for our own benefit.

By the comfort and peace resulting from these blessings, it would win our hearts to love the God, who is so immensely amiable and gracious to us; to be studious of doing his pleasure, who has made such unspeakably rich provision for our happiness. The apostle prays for his Thessalonians

salonian converts, that the Father of everlasting compassions, would first *comfort their hearts*, and then, and thereby, *establish them in every good word and work*.

I should make no scruple to send my fast-sermon for your perusal, if I had one. But it has pleased the divine providence to visit me with a violent fever, which has confined me for many weeks; I am still the prisoner of this disease, so that I was incapable of going abroad on the fast-day. And indeed, if it had been otherwise, I should scarcely have been able to gratify my own inclination, by complying with your hints; because I never write my sermons, having accustomed myself to preach without notes; and it was owing to a particular incident, that those three discourses which I published, were committed to writing.

Permit me, Madam, to wish, that you may be steadfast and immoveable in your present turn of mind, which is so truly wise and noble, that by him who sitteth in heaven and beholds all the children of men, it may be said of Miss ***, as it was formerly said of another excellent person; *Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her.*

To these wishes, allow me the additional pleasure of being,

Madam,

your most obedient

humble servant, &c.

L E T T E R LXXVII.

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

Madam,

Weston Favell, March 11. 1758.

I Am much obliged for your benevolent wishes, relating to my health. By way of return, permit me to wish that your soul may prosper, may flourish, may blossom as a rose; that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

From this passage we may observe, that the way to advance

vance in true holiness of heart and life, is to advance in the knowledge of Christ.—It is for want of knowing Christ, that the generality of mankind are so captivated by trifles, and enslaved to transient gratifications. It is for want of knowing Christ more thoroughly, that many Christians have so little peace and joy, and many go mournfully in their way to eternity.

By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many.—By giving them the knowledge of himself, of his divine dignity and inestimable precious work; of that grand price, which he paid for the redemption of sinners, which delivers them from the wrath to come, and intitles them to the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

The divine power, says St Peter, has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness.—How? Through the knowledge of him, who has called us to glory and virtue; through the knowledge of Christ, as calling us to the enjoyment of eternal glory, which he has procured for us by his blood; and thereby most sweetly leading and engaging us, to the exercise of every virtue.

I hope Marshall on *sanctification* will be blessed to your consolation and edification. If it is not at the first reading, it may at the second, or it may at the third. I would say to the reader of this excellent treatise, as the prophet Elijah said to his servant, who went to the sea in order to make observation, but found nothing worthy of notice, *Go again seven times.*

I have seen Dr Glynn's poem, intitled, *The day of judgment.* It is not without elegance and beauty, but it wants that energy and pathos, which, on so grand and interesting an occasion, should alarm, transport, and awe our souls; but its chief deficiency, in my opinion, is, that it neglects to ascribe proper honour unto Christ; he is indeed very slightly hinted at in one chosen line, but he should have made the most distinguished figure throughout the whole piece; all judgment is committed to him.—It is Christ who will come in the clouds of heaven; *we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.* This to the believer is a most comfortable and delightful consideration; "My Redeemer is my Judge. He who died for me passes the

“ final sentence. Look ! how great is his majesty and
 “ glory ! so great is my atonement and propitiation ”,

Should I ever come to London, I will be sure to do myself the pleasure of waiting upon Miss ***. In the meantime, what she mentions by way of caution, shall be observed with all punctuality due to a command,

By her most obedient

humble servant, &c.

L E T T E R LXXVIII.

Thoughts on different subjects.

Dear Sir,

U Pon a repeated review of your sketches for instructing your family on Sunday-evenings, I really do not know how to improve them.—I think they are well digested.—but when you exercise your talent in speaking from those sketches, do not forget to implore a blessing on what you are going about.—Stir up the gift of God which is in you by a zealous use of them, and your yourself will improve them better than I can for you.—I shall only suggest, that as soon as you have finished, set down as fresh heads for another occasion; what new thoughts occurred to you while you was speaking. Oh ! let us work while the day lasts ! My dear friend, the Judge is at the door, and eternity at hand. May we watch and pray always, that we may be found worthy to stand before the Son of man at his coming.

“ I inclose part of a letter, sent by a clever man, and no mean scholar.

“ This with infinite pleasure I can inform you, that I
 “ am now brought to a sense of my duty, to which I was
 “ an entire stranger till lately.—Glory be to God, I have
 “ now some concern upon my mind, some serious thoughts
 “ of a future state !—How amazing is it, that a person
 “ should arrive at my years, without knowing any thing
 “ of the religion he professes. Strange as it is, this was
 “ my

“ my case ; for till within these six months, I was as much
 “ in the dark as to spiritual affairs, as one who had never
 “ heard the name of Christ. The Bible was to me the
 “ same as an unknown language, and all my pretences to
 “ religion were nothing but a mere lifeless formality. Oh !
 “ that the inexpressible marks of the love of my God, and
 “ his goodness to me, may increase the love I owe to him,
 “ more and more every day !”

Our friend Mr H——, who you know is a great favourer of the mystic writers, has desired me to read Mr Law's *Spirit of prayer*, and *Spirit of love*, which is an appendix to it. I shall ask him, whether he designed it to puzzle or edify me ?—I am sure it has done the first to me, may it do the latter to him.—Oh ! what need have we to pray for that blessed Spirit which may lead us into all truth.

I begin to be weaned from human writings, even from the most applauded.—The pure milk of the divine word my soul covets. Do not you relish its sweetness, and taste its power more and more ? The apostle enjoins us in every thing to *give thanks, for this is the will of God*, (1 Thess. v. 18.) and if we are to thank him for every thing, how ought we to thank him, how can we sufficiently thank him, for such a treasury of blessings as the holy Bible contains for us ?—And yet—is it credible ?—There are, there are those, who neglect these gracious tidings of a reconciliation with God, through the mediation of his own Son Jesus Christ.

But whatever be the conduct of others, let you and I, dear Sir, esteem it as it deserves, and say with the psalmist, *I will delight myself in thy statutes, I will not forget thy word. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous works*.—David you see prayed to God for illumination, and *talked of divine things*. That this may be accomplished in us, and that we may follow David's example, I dare say you will add an Amen, to the Amen of,

Dear Sir,

Your's very sincerely, &c.

P. S. I am told, and grieved I am to hear it, that the once zealous Mr *** is grown quite indolent, (no very laudable character for a clergyman), and has entirely laid aside his translation and improvement of the elegant Dr Stearne, *De visitatione infirmorum*. He shewed me a specimen of it some months ago: the translation was spirited, and the notes well calculated to supply the author's deficiencies.—Nothing perhaps is more wanted, or would be more useful, (especially to the clergy), than a judicious treatise on visiting the sick, in a neat pocket volume; but I am sensible, there is nothing equally difficult to execute. I never yet saw one to my mind.—*The clergyman's companion*, as it is called, is little more than a collection of prayers, with the order of visitation of the sick, out of the common prayer, the communion-service, and the office of public and private baptism. If methinks such a man as Mr W—— of T—— could find time to set about it, it would be done effectually, because he is a most experienced Christian, and has long been accustomed to the chambers of the sick, and would write from facts, and his own knowledge of the human mind.—I would not give a rush for a jumble compiled from different authors:—that is the labour of the head, and not the feeling of the heart, and can never produce the effects I wish to see.

L E T T E R LXXIX.

A proof of a future state of happiness, &c.

Weston-Favell, July 26. 1756.

NOW, my dear friend, I have procured your favourite author, Downname's *Christian warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh*. He is, indeed, a pleasing perspicuous writer. The language, as you observed, remarkably pure and correct; he is very experimental, and enters into the distresses of tempted souls; many things are sweet, comfortable, charming. Sometimes I think he draws a little veil over the grace of God, not suffering it to blaze out in its full lustre and glory. Do not you think

think he is somewhat inaccurate, in stating the nature of justification? *Lib. 2. cap. 50.* "Justification," he says, "consisteth in two parts; the first, Remission of our sins for the full satisfaction of Christ, by his death and sufferings: the other, the imputation of his habitual and active righteousness." Should it not rather be, Justification consists of two parts; the first, remission of our sins; the second, being perfectly righteous in God's sight; and both these spring from the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the poor sinner?

I find, from your manuscript, it is your opinion, that the antediluvian sacrifices were slain by the sword of the cherubim, planted and waved at the entrance of Eden. This is a very remarkable, and very awful circumstance, and if true, very worthy of particular notice. But what reasons have you, dear Sir, for the support of this sentiment? Be so kind as to mention them, at your leisure.

Mr P***, about a week after his return to Northamptonshire, gave me your letter. I fear he will become a prey to the allurements of the world.---I believe he is not very zealous for the gospel of Christ. I am pretty sure, he does not love the servants of our Lord; therefore I expect, that, from this quarter, my character will soon be put under an eclipse; nor shall I be much disappointed, if by this incident, my new friend is put away from my sight. Thanks for your hints concerning my conduct; it is very reasonable; and shall be observed.

I have sometimes thought, that the best, strongest proof of a future state of happiness occurring in the Old Testament, is deducible from the history of Enoch. Enoch walked with God, was high in his favour, and had much communion with him; it is recorded as a singular reward of his holy and exemplary life, that *he was not, for God took him*: now if the ancient people of God had no notion of a future state of happiness, what strange apprehensions must they form, concerning this instance of the divine procedure? At this rate, JEHOVAH must appear to punish in the most exemplary and dreadful manner, his first and greatest favourite. Whereas, suppose them rooted in the belief of a much happier condition succeeding the present life,

life, and the case is plain, and God is justified in his doings.---Please to give me your opinion, as to this argument.

I hope, you are thinking of your new version of Psalm civ. which will be very agreeable, and I hope, not a little edifying to,

Dear Sir,

Your much obliged and

affectionate friend, &c.

P. S. I here send you Mr Moses Browne's almost literal translation of Luther's most comfortable hymn, which is in very considerable esteem in the German church. *Zimmermannus de cognitionis Christi eminentia*, is a comment on it; and is now translating by Mr Browne at my desire.

L U T H E R's H Y M N.

In eight practical rules.

I.

'TIS not too arduous an essay,
To tread resolv'd the gospel-way;
The sensual instinct to controul,
And warm with purer fire the soul.
Nature may raise her fleshly strife,
Reluctant to the heav'nly life;
Loth in a Saviour's death to share,
Her daily cross, compell'd to bear;
But grace omnipotent at length,
Shall arm the saint, with saving strength;
Through the sharp war with aids attend,
And his long conflict sweetly end.

See *Zimmermannus*, pag. 5.

II.

Act but the infant's gentle part;
Give up to love thy willing heart:

No fondest parent's melting breast
Yearns, like thy God's, to make thee blest :
Taught its dear mother soon to know,
The tenderest babe his love can show.
Bid thy base servile fear retire ;
This task no labour will require.

Zimmermannus, pag. 11.

III.

The Sov'reign Father, good and kind,
Wants but to have his child resign'd :
Wants but thy yielded heart (no more !)
With his large gifts of grace to store.
He to thy soul no anguish brings,
From thy own stubborn will it springs :
That foe but crucify, (thy bane !),
Nought shall thou know of frowns or pain.

Zimmermannus, pag. 17.

IV.

Shake from thy soul o'erwhelm'd, deprest,
Th' encumb'ring load that galls her rest ;
That wastes her strength in bondage vain :—
With courage break th' enslaving chain.
Let pray'r exert its conqu'ring pow'r ;
Cry in thy tempted trembling hour,
" My God ! my Father ! save thy son !"—
'Tis heard,—and all thy fears are done.

Zimmermannus, pag. 32.

V.

Yet if (more earnest complaints to raise)
Thy God a while his aid delays,
Tho' you don't now his kind hand feel,
Thy grief let lenient patience heal.
Or if corruption's strength prevail,
And oft thy pilgrim footsteps fail ;
Pray for his grace with louder cries,
So shalt thou cleans'd and stronger rise.

Zimmermannus, pag. 43.

These next lines within the hooks do not belong to
Luther's

Luther's hymn, but are used by *Zimmermannus*, pag. 52. as an illustration of the preceding stanza.

[The faster hold my faith on Jesus takes,
His brighter glories on my spirit breaks.
If then to heav'n I lift my votive hands,
Love's strongest flame my raptur'd soul expands.
Thee, Lord, she loves, and would with zeal forego
A thousand worlds, love dear as thine to know.]

Then Luther's hymn proceeds thus :

VI.

If haply still thy mental shade,
Dark as the midnight gloom be made,
On the sure faithful arm divine
Firm let thy fastning trust recline.
The gentlest sire, the best of friends,
To thee nor loss, nor harm intends :
Tho' toss'd on a tempestuous main,
No wreck thy vessel shall sustain.
Should there remain of rescuing grace
No glimpse, no footstep left to trace;
Hear thy Lord's voice :—'Tis Jesus will,
" Believe (thou poor dark pilgrim) still."

Zimmermannus, pag. 55.

VII.

Then thy sad night of terrors past,
(Tho' the dread season long may last),
Sweet light shall from the tranquil skies,
Like a fair dawn before thee rise.
Then shall thy faith's bright grounds appear,
Thy eyes shall view salvation clear.
Be hence encourag'd more, when try'd,
On the best Father to confide.
Ah! from thy mind extirpate quite
The sickly films that cloud her sight:
See! of how rich a lot, how blest,
The true believer stands possess!

Zimmermannus, pag. 68.

These lines within the hooks do not belong to Luther's hymn, but are used by *Zimmermannus*, as an illustration of the preceding stanza. See pag. 74.

[Loose from hard bonds, my God ! a mind
In chains too fast, too strait confin'd.
I'm heal'd !—set free !—from sin made pure !
Thy blood, my Christ, has wrought the cure.
I feel a pow'r my will controul !
Quench thy long drought my thirsty soul !
The living fountain now I've found,
Diffusing balmy streams around.]

Then Luther's hymn concludes with this eighth practical rule.

VIII.

Come, backward soul ! to God resign ;
Peace, his best blessing, shall be thine :
Boldly recumbent on his care,
Cast thy felt burthens only there.

Zimmermannus, pag. 88.

L E T T E R LXXX.

An advice to physicians.

Dear Sir,

Saturday Morning.

I Find by the papers, that your old friend Dr *** the physician is dead.—What a call to us to get our lamps trimmed, and our souls ready for their exit !—what a forcible admonition to do good to immortal souls while we have opportunity !—May the God of glory be ever with you, and bless you with all spiritual blessings !

I greatly wish that those in the practice of physic, would study St Paul as well as Hippocrates—and attend occasionally to the religious wants of their patients, when they are consulted as to their bodily disorders. This would be acting the part of Christian physicians.—This would be endeavouring to copy after the compassionate Physician of mankind,

O O

mankind, who, while he cured the body, cured the soul.

Being totally and continually silent at the patient's bedside, is, I think, in some measure, denying or being ashamed of the divine Redeemer, who bought us with his blood.—Is it not, as it were, refusing to embark in his cause? How many sick might be improved and comforted by a physician, without any hindrance to his prescriptions, detriment to his character, or loss of his time?—Oh! that these masters of the healing art would set the Lord always before them, and then he would direct their paths!

I was looking the other day into the life of Sir Philip Sidney, who wrote the *Arcadia*, in Queen Elizabeth's time,—and I find it recorded of him, that, “being shot
“ in the thigh in encountering the Spaniards near Zutphen
“ in Holland, and parched with thirst, a bottle of liquor
“ was procured for him,—and just as Sir Philip was about
“ drinking it, a poor soldier in the same condition, bleeding and ghastly, was carried along by him, and cast up
“ his dying eyes at the same bottle; which Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his own mouth, and gave it the
“ poor man with these words, *Thy necessity, honest friend, is yet greater than mine.*”—He told the surgeons when they cut him, “that they had indeed a man under their
“ hands of a sensible and delicate nature, yet one to whom
“ the great Redeemer had given power above himself,
“ either to *do*, or *suffer*: and therefore desired they would
“ not throw a blemish on their art, through over-tenderness.”

His last words were, “Love my memory:—cherish my
“ friends:—their fidelity to me may assure you they are
“ honest:—but above all, govern your own will and affections, by the will and word of your Creator and Saviour; in me beholding the end of this world, and all its vanities.” I will warrant you the soldiers remembered these words of their general; and so would the sick in like manner, long remember the words of their physician, if he would now and then introduce a few religious hints, and drop occasionally a striking sentence or two, with propriety and seriousness.

Worldly craftiness is a bad guide; I wish you may have
religious

religious discretion for your's, as Telemachus had the discreet Mentor.—And that you would begin (instead of paying court to the great) to court souls for the everlasting Bridegroom.—This is your true interest—and will avail you, when every worldly consideration will be found ineffectual.

As soon as I had read Mr ***'s letter, I burnt it according to your desire.—Who can now retrieve the syllables, sentences, and words? Thus are the sins, all the sins of them that believe in the divine Jesus, done away. What a privilege! what a blessing! should not our souls exult in it? should not our discourse dwell upon it?

Adieu, dear Sir,—and believe me with great respect, and hearty wishes for your present and eternal welfare,

Your's, &c.

L E T T E R LXXXI.

Evangelical doctrines known by their fruits.

Dear Sir,

Weston-Favell, Monday Morning.

I Am much obliged to you for the loan of Dr Squire's *enquiry into the foundation of the English constitution*: the performance seems to be curious, useful, and interesting.—But how interesting soever the subject may be to others, it can be very little so now to me; as my indisposition is daily increasing, and must, in all human probability, soon put an end to my being.

In spite of the sarcastical reflections you say are thrown upon me, I must recommend to every one Marshall on *Sanctification*, and Jenks's *Submission to the righteousness of God*.—These are with me the two fundamental books.—These teach vital religion. Do they, who would decry faith, and extol their good works, distinguish themselves by the practice of them? If not, I must beg leave to say, they are self-condemned.—Only observe for the next month (*by their fruits you will know them*) the conduct of those, who are such loud advocates for the merit, the dignity of
man,

man, and the freedom of his action; and of those who rely on the active and passive obedience of Christ. And then tell me ingenuously, which are the people that pay the greatest reverence to the word of God; and in particular to the fourth commandment?—Enquire which of them use family-prayer? whose conversation is most edifying?—which of them visit and travel on Sundays? and which of them pass that holy day as become those, who have named the name of Christ? I will be bold to say, that on an impartial examination, the majority will be found on the side of those, who embrace the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness; and who expect salvation by him alone, and not by deeds which they have done.—Yet I should wonder how men of discernment (men who, one would think, should be daily sensible of their innumerable failings) could possibly espouse the opposite doctrines, had I not too many melancholy proofs to the contrary.—You may safely confide in this doctrine; for this, dear Sir, is not to be considered as the particular opinion of James Hervey, but it is the general opinion of our exemplary reformers; it is the doctrine of our articles and our homilies.—Will you say, that our modern moral Christians, if I may so call them, are to be set in competition with men like these? I appeal to facts—Mark the effect of preaching mere morality, and of preaching the grace of Christ.—But so long as the devil is suffered to deceive the nations, and so long as the heart is unconvinced of sin, we may assure ourselves, the doctrines of justification by Christ's righteousness, and salvation by free grace, will meet with opposition. Therefore St Paul exhorts Timothy, *Αγωνίζου τον καλον αγωνα της πιστης*, to *fight the good fight of faith*; it is an address to a combatant, and supposes a conflict; a noble conflict, *καλον*, the finest word in the most expressive language, importing all that is good and great; let us not then be ashamed of the cause.

My cough is very troublesome—I can get little rest—medicines yield no relief—but my never-failing cordial is the love of Christ.

Religion bears my spirits up,
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope,
In oaths *,—in promises †,—in blood ‡.

Watts's hymns, book I.

Staynoe, whom you enquire after, was a good man, a tutor at Trinity college, Oxford, and afterwards rector of St Leonard Foster-lane; and in the year 1704, published in two volumes octavo, his treatise on *Salvation by Jesus Christ*. Mine is the second edition:—It is no contemptible book, though the style is rather too prolix, and he has some peculiar notions.—But who has ever seen a faultless book?—All writers have their failings more or less.—No mortal is exempted from them; not even Homer, Virgil or Milton himself.—This ought to teach us candour and humility in such a state of imperfection; and above all it should inspire us with a reverential admiration of the *book of God*, which alone is free from error; by which we are guided into all truth; and in which we are promised eternal life; procured for us by the righteousness, sufferings, and mediation of Jesus Christ.—I wish, most heartily wish, you may sufficiently regard this inestimable book; and then you will be like the tree planted by the water side, which bringeth forth its fruits in due season, and like that happy man of whom it is written by the psalmist, *Look! whatsoever he doth it shall prosper.*

I am, my dear friend,

affectionately, and unalterably your's, &c.

* Heb. vi. 17. † 2 Pet. i. 4. ‡ Rev. i. 5.

F I N I S.



A
C O L L E C T I O N

O F

S E R M O N S and T R A C T S.

C O N T A I N I N G,

S E R M O N S.

- I. The MINISTRY of RE-
CONCILIATION.
- II. The CROSS of CHRIST
the CHRISTIAN'S GLORY.
- III. The TIME of DANGER.
- IV. The MEANS of SAFETY.
- V. The WAY of HOLINESS.

T R A C T S.

CONSIDERATIONS on the
prevailing Custom of VI-
SITING on the SABBATH.
THOUGHTS on the EDU-
CATION of a DAUGH-
TER.

BY THE LATE REVEREND

Mr JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

Rector of *Weston-Favell, Northamptonshire.*

Printed in the Year 1763.

A
COLLECTION

OF

SERMONS and TRACTS.

CONTAINING,

SERMONS.

- I. The MINISTRY of RECONCILIATION.
- II. The CROSS of CHRIST the CHRISTIAN'S GLORY.
- III. The TIME of DANGER.
- IV. The MEANS of SAFETY.
- V. The WAY of HOLINESS.

TRACTS.

CONSIDERATIONS on the
prevailing Custom of Vi-
siting on the SABBATH.
THOUGHTS on the EDU-
CATION of a DAUGH-
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OLD FELLOWS

OF

SERMONS AND TRACTS

CONTAINING

SERMONS
THE MINISTRY OF RE-CONCILIATION
THE CROSS OF CHRIST
THE CHRISTIAN OLOGY
IN THE TIME OF DANGER
THE MEANS OF SALVATION
THE WAY OF HOLINESS

BY THE LATE REVEREND
MR JAMES HENRY ALM

RECTOR OF WESTBURY, WILTSHIRE

Printed in the Year 1801



S E R M O N I.

T H E

MINISTRY of RECONCILIATION.

Preached at the Parish-church of

ALL-SAINTS in NORTHAMPTON.

2 COR. V. 18.

All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

THE love of God, that supremely glorious, and supremely gracious Being, is of all other tempers, the most delightful and divine. A sacred flower, which in its early bud is happiness, and in its full bloom is heaven.—To plant this noble principle in the breast, to cultivate its growth, and bring it to maturity, is the grand end of all religion, and the genuine fruit of faith unfeigned.—Angels are happy, because the love of God triumphs eternally, and without a rival, in their exalted affections. True believers are happy, because the love of God, in a prevailing degree, is shed abroad in their hearts. The gospel is a dispensation of happiness, because it discovers the superabundant loving-kindness of God to man, and urges the most engaging motives for our ardent love to his almighty Majesty.

The gospel represents the great God, not only as bestowing upon his creatures, all the good they enjoy; but as effecting their reconciliation to his own adorable Self. Effecting this most desirable of all blessings, not barely by vouchsafing a pardon, but a pardon procured by the death of his Son: and by this enriching circumstance, infinitely enhanced;

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enhanced; arrayed in all the charms, that Heaven itself could give.—To render the purposes of his love more effectual and extensive, he has instituted an order of men to publish these glad tidings; and to invite, yea, to beseech the world, to partake the exceeding riches of his grace.—All which the apostle has expressed in my text, with his usual energy and conciseness; *All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

From which words permit me, with all that simplicity which becomes a minister of the humble Jesus.

I. To enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable representation of the blessed God, discoverable even by the light of nature; *All things are of him.*

II. To remind you, how much more illustriously the delightful attributes of the Deity are displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption; in that *he hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.*

III. To observe the benign import, and beneficial tendency of the gospel-ministry, expressed in that remarkable clause, *He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*

First, Then let me enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable representation of the blessed God, discoverable even by the light of nature; *All things are of him.*—Heaven, and the heaven of heavens are his, with all their hosts. Thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, all the happy beings, that sit at the fountain-head of felicity, were produced by his power, and are supplied with blessings from his hand, are filled with joy from his countenance.—If we trace the various emanations of comfort and advantage, that refresh our lower world, we shall find reason to acknowledge with the psalmist, *All our fresh springs are in God.* *The day is thine,* says the same sacred writer, *and the night is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.* The magnificent luminaries in the sky, are lamps of the Lord; hung up on high, to dispense the cheering gift of light amidst all the families of nature. The interchanges of night and day, with the vicissitudes of revolving

living seasons, are his ministers; all sent on errands of kindness, and bringing the most valuable presents in their hands. The innumerable variety of living creatures, and of nutritional vegetables, are the portion, not which our own industry has procured, but which our heavenly Father's bounty has settled upon us.

Every great endowment, bestowed on the children of men; every noble achievement, accomplished by renowned personages; these derive their original from the uncreated fountain of perfection and of power.—If Solomon is possessed of enlarged wisdom, and kingly qualities, he expressly acknowledges, it is from the Lord, superintending human affairs, that such kings are advanced to reign; and by the Lord enlightening their minds, that such princes decree justice. If, at one period, Nebuchadnezzar pursues his conquests with irresistible impetuosity, it is to scourge the offending people of the Lord; and banish idolatry from their worship, as the driving wind swept the chaff from their floors. If, at another juncture, Cyrus is equally victorious, and *comes upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay*; it was the Lord of hosts that raised up this accomplished commander from the east, and bid him execute his designs of restoring love to his reformed nation.—All those arts which meliorate, and sciences which embellish life, even these are from the Lord, *who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*.

The time would fail me to enumerate particulars.—Whatever is beneficial to communities, or comfortable to individuals; whatever springs from the rain of heaven, or is produced by fruitful seasons; whatever administers to the improvement, or cheers the heart of man; all, all acknowledge God for their author. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. The whole earth is filled with the profusion of his beneficence. And where, where is the creature, that has not tasted, that does not subsist on the inexhaustible stores of his bounty?—And though affliction also comes from the Father of our spirits, yet this is no derogation from his tender mercies; since he chastens, not with an arbitrary severity, but with a parental pity; he chastens only to amend, and these light, these transient

tribulations; are preparatives for an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

And is not such a Being worthy of our highest admiration, and our devoutest love? Has he not, by such inef-
fable excellencies, such unmeasurable benignity—has he not an undoubted claim to the affections of our hearts, the praises of our tongues, and the unintermitted services of our lives? He is the source of all our good; should he not be also the center of all our gratitude, and of our whole obedience?—But our obligations will rise immensely higher, if we consider,

Secondly, How much more illustriously the delightful attributes of the Deity are displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption; in that *he hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*.—Man was created upright, immaculate, and in the image of God; heavenly wisdom shone bright in his understanding, and true holiness sat enthroned in his heart.—But how soon, and how fatally did he fall! From what height of perfection, to what depth of degeneracy! Since that destructive transgression, all flesh has corrupted his way; every man is become brutish in his knowledge; and the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually. *Our iniquities separated between us and our God, and our sins hid his face from us*, as from an abominable object. Nay, our sins accused us at his righteous tribunal; and, like the blood of Abel, cried to heaven for vengeance. Vengeance and fiery indignation was our expected doom, and eternal death the wages due to our offences.—What rendered the misery of mankind still more excessively deplorable, and only not desperate, was, that *they were without strength*; without any power to make satisfaction for their provocations, or extricate themselves from this abyss of woe.—Oh wretched, wretched man, if left in this state of guilt and ruin! If abandoned by the God from whom thou hast ungratefully revolted, better had it been for thee never to have existed.

But, behold the kindness and love of God our Saviour! Harken to the sounding of his bowels and of his mercies towards us! “I have seen, said he, (as in the case of
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"enslaved Israel), I have seen the affliction of my fallen creatures. They have undone themselves, but in me^{*} is their recovery. Satan has deceived, and deceiving has destroyed them; but I, even I will deliver them."—Wherewithal will the Lord accomplish this design of his free, unmerited goodness? By the blood of bulls or of goats, or of all the cattle upon a thousand hills? Contemptible, to the last degree, are such beggarly oblations; only so far as they typify the all-glorious sacrifice.—Was an angel charged with this important business, or the highest seraph bidden to interpose as the repairer of our breach? The angels were absolutely incapable of executing so great a work. It required a far abler agent to negotiate our reconciliation. It must cost incomparably more to redeem guilty souls. Therefore, the God of our salvation "laid the help upon one that is mighty." He appointed to the most momentous of all offices, the most illustrious of all beings. He appointed his own Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.

Behold then the Son of God taking our nature, that he may act as our Mediator. Admirable constitution! full of wonder, and full of grace!—How joyful to the sinner! The work must infallibly prosper in such hands, such a surety cannot fail of succeeding in all he undertakes. How gracious in the Father! Could there be a stronger assurance, or a more emphatical demonstration of his boundless beneficence, than to send the Son of his bosom; the Son of his eternal delight; the Son, dearer to him than all worlds? How condescending in the Saviour! Would Ahasuerus abdicate his imperial diadem, or the great ruler of Babylon forego the honours of his enlarged dominions, to attend on the welfare of some ignoble captive that grinds at a mill, or of some infamous malefactor that is chained in a dungeon? Yet the everlasting Potentate of heaven and universal nature, undertakes a more humbling office of friendship, for a race of abject creatures, that dwell in dust, and were doomed to hell.—Let every child of Adam look unto Christ by faith, as all the people of Israel looked unto Moses,

^{*} See Hosea, chap. xiii. 9.

when he went into the tabernacle of the congregation to intercede before the Lord *.

We have seen the person reconciling, let us next contemplate the manner of reconciling. A subject equally astonishing and delightful! The Father reconciled us to himself, by laying upon his Son the iniquities of us all: by admitting him to stand in our stead, and by exacting from him the punishment which we had incurred. God reconciled us to himself, not only by the humiliation, but by the suffering of this Prince of heaven: and not by some slighter suffering, but by his suffering unto death: and not by his undergoing a common death, but the most ignominious and tormenting of all deaths, the death of the cross. *It pleased the Father, says the apostle, to reconcile all things to himself; making peace by the blood of the cross.*—Because we deserved shame; the Lord of glory was numbered with malefactors, and loaded with infamy. Because we deserved the bitterness of death; the Lord of life endured the pangs of dissolution, in their unabated and most racking extremities. Because we were obnoxious to the curse of the law, therefore the ever-blessed *Jesus delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*

Glorious propitiation! and altogether as complete as glorious! What now shall terrify the true believer? What shall stand between him, and his eternal hopes?—Shall Satan muster up his accusations, and set them in frightful array? Yet, though there may be much guilt, there is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ.—Does the law take the guilty mortal by the throat, and with its rigorous severity, say, *Pay me that thou owest?* It is paid, fully paid by the intervention and suretyship, not of a mean man, but of the mighty God made flesh. Does divine justice demand satisfaction, for the wrongs received from sinners? It is not only satisfied, but most awfully glorified by this wonderful oblation. In short, this is a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It vindicates the honour of God's holiness. It displays his unsearchable wisdom. It manifests his unutterable good-

* See Exodus, chap. xxxiii. 8.

ness. It gives the most magnificent and lovely lustre to all the divine perfections.—May we not then, looking unto our bleeding Saviour, and pleading his inestimable propitiation, venture to adopt the apostle's challenge, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; not imputing our trespasses unto us, but transferring them to his dear Son. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, and by his precious death hath made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.*

I have been the more copious upon this subject, because it is not only the grand point in my text, but is the very heart of the gospel; the fountain of all our comforts, and the foundation of all our hopes. But I proceed, and with greater brevity,

Thirdly, To observe the benign import, and beneficial tendency of the gospel-ministry, expressed in that remarkable clause, *He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.* Here, I am not attempting to magnify my office, or to aggrandize the ministerial character; but only to render our services acceptable to our brethren.—Some persons, whether through prejudice or mistake, are apprehensive of being terrified by our message, or *tormented before the time* by our doctrine. But can the news of reconciliation to the Lord God of hosts terrify, or the offer of remission of sins torment? How welcome should be the approach, or, to speak in the elegant language of a prophet, *How beautiful the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!* And can there be better tidings, more reviving, or more transporting, than those of the everlasting gospel? which saith unto Sion, *Thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged; thy God is reconciled, and instead of abhorring thee as a rebel, is willing to embrace thee as a child?*—When our armies have been in the field, and some very important, some decisive engagement drawing near; with what eagerness have you expected, and with what delight have you received, the account of a complete victory gained? And is not our report equally worthy of all acceptance; which declares Sa-
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tan vanquished, and sin destroyed; declares death abolished, hell deprived of its prey, you, and all the rich advantages of peace with Heaven, restored? When Peter lay bound in prison, was the angel an unwelcome minister, who struck away his fetters, opened the gates of iron, and transmitted him, free and unmolested, to the cordial salutations of his friends? As you are all, by nature, in bondage to sin, our business is, to take you by the hand, and lead you out of this ignominious slavery, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; while the Spirit of the Most High breaks off your shackles, and makes you free indeed.—What manna can be more refreshing than such a message? What balm more healing than such a service?—If, at any time, we arm our words with terror, and denounce the vengeance of God on every soul of man that doth evil; this is only to awaken you from that gay insensibility, which would lull you into irretrievable ruin. It is like the gathering clouds, and the distant bursts of thunder, which might warn Noah to retire into the ark, before that infinitely more tremendous deluge came, which was to sweep the careless world away.—Whether therefore we display the allurements of divine love, it is for your delight; or whether we bend the bow of divine indignation, it is for your benefit: to win you to happiness, or drive you from misery. So that in every respect, and by all our ministrations, we are to be *helpers of your faith, and furtherers of your joy.*

And let not any one suspect, that a message of such free and rich grace, has a tendency to sooth men into supineness, or serve the cause of licentiousness. It is, of all other expedients, most effectually calculated to reconcile us to God, in another sense of the word: to subdue our enmity, and captivate our perverse affections; to impress our alienated hearts with adoring gratitude, and engage our refractory wills to dutiful obedience.—For, can we be cold and indifferent to such immense benignity? Can we affront and grieve such unspeakably tender kindness? What effect had David's clemency, in sparing Saul's life, when it was in the power of his hand, to have dispatched that implacable enemy? It overcame, for a while, even malice
itself.

itself: it fetched tears of sorrow from the persecutors eyes, and expressions of the most endeared affection from his lips *. And when God, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, not only spares us guilty wretches, but punishes his immaculate Son in our stead; when he bids the sword of justice pass by our devoted heads, and sheathe itself in the heart of his beloved Son; can we resist such heavenly goodness? Can we spurn such bowels of mercy? Must not love, so divine and infinite, melt even the most obdurate heart; make us sling down, with abhorrence, the weapons of rebellion, and constrain us, sweetly constrain us to obedience †?

Let me now, conformably to my sacred commission, beseech you all to be reconciled. Especially let me beseech the humble penitent, and the haughty self-righteous moralist.—Ye humble penitents that are convinced of sin, and mourn for sin, be of good comfort. God has abounded in the riches of his grace towards you, and has given you a ransom to rely on, of higher dignity than all heavens, or of more value than all worlds. The men of Tyre made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend ‡; the God of glory has constituted his dear Son, your atoning sacrifice, your prevailing advocate. The men of Tyre desired conditions of peace, the Lord Jesus hath both obtained and fulfilled the conditions of your peace. Could there be a more glorious person chose to act your reconciler, than the Prince of heaven, and heir of all things? Could there be a more effectual method of reconciliation, than his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.—Fly then to this all-sufficient Redeemer. Rely on his most meritorious and satisfactory sufferings. Be your sins ever so numerous, ever so enormous, these need be no bar to your acceptance.

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 16.

† Mr Hervey had added, by way of a note, the following words in the copy which he transcribed, and from which this is printed, "When I preached this sermon, I recapitulated in this place, as you or any reader may do if he pleases, the preceding heads, but I thought it unnecessary to transcribe such a recapitulation."

‡ Acts xii. 20.

For God has received an atonement : an infinite atonement God has received. So that he can admit you to his favour, unworthy as you are, without the least blemish to his avenging justice. He can, he will admit you, as freely as if you had never done amiss. Trust therefore in your reconciling Saviour. Place a chearful confidence in his propitiating merits. Only let the grace of God, which has appeared with such transcendent loveliness in the bleeding Jesus,—let this grace teach you, with a prevailing efficacy, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world.

As to those of a contrary character, who are righteous in their own eyes, what shall I say? Shall I decry the exercise of morality, or disparage the duties of holiness? God forbid. The gospel is a doctrine according to godliness, and true holiness is the health, is the happiness of the soul. These duties issuing from faith, and recommended by the intercession of Christ, are acceptable to the divine Majesty. But these are not your Saviour. God has not reconciled the world to himself by their own pious practices, but by his Son Jesus Christ.—Can your charitable deeds expiate your innumerable offences? As soon may a single drop of pure water correct and sweeten the unfathomable brine of the ocean. Can your defective performances satisfy the demands of a perfect law, or your wandering devotions screen you from the displeasure of an injured God? As well may your lifted hand eclipse the sun, or intercept the lightning when it darts through the bursting cloud.—There is no other name given under heaven, whereby you may be reconciled to God, and saved from wrath, but only the name, only the name, remember, of Jesus Christ. Here fix your hopes, and you shall never be disappointed. Fix them on any other object, and everlasting confusion will ensue.—We beseech you therefore in God's stead, we beseech you for your own souls sake, reject not this abundant mercy, neglect not this great salvation.

Now, unto him who has reconciled us to himself, and washed us from our sins, in his Son's blood, be glory and thanksgiving, love and obedience, henceforth and for ever.

S E R M O N II.

T H E

C R O S S O F C H R I S T

T H E C H R I S T I A N ' S G L O R Y .

Preached at the VISITATION of

The Reverend JOHN BROWN, D. D.

ARCHDEACON of Northampton.

GAL. vi. 14.

God forbid, that I should glory, - save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.——

THE cross of Christ, was the favourite topic of St Paul's contemplation.—The cross of Christ, was the chosen subject of his sermons, and the grand theme of his writings.—At all times, and in every capacity, he professed, he avowed, he *gloried* in the cross of Christ.—Nay, what is very remarkable, he gloried in *nothing* else.—And, what is still more observable, he *abhorred* the thought of glorying in any thing else. He speaks of such a practice, in the language of detestation and dread; accounting it a high degree, both of folly and of wickedness: *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

It may therefore be an employ worthy of our present attention, to enquire into the *nature*, the *reasonableness*, and the *wisdom*, of this resolution. All which, I hope, will appear, if we consider,

I. In what the apostle would *not* glory.

II. In what he *did* glory.

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III. What

III. What *reason* he had, to glory in the cross of Christ.

These points being briefly dispatched, I shall beg leave to add a word of *Application*; suggested by the tenor of the discourse, and adapted to the circumstances of my several hearers. And may that adorable Jesus, who has exchanged his cross for an heavenly crown, accompany all with his divine blessing!

Let us then enquire,

I. In what the apostle did *not* glory?—Not in the *greatness* of his *learning*, as a scholar. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; educated by the most famous tutor of the age. Nor was his genius, or his industry, inferior to the other advantages of his education. Yet all these advantages, with their correspondent acquisitions, he accounted no better than pompous ignorance, or refined folly.

Not in the *strictness* of his *life*, as a Jew —In this respect, he profited above his equals: *Was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers* *; *after the strictest sect of their religion, he lived a Pharisee* †: Was zealous, exceedingly zealous, of the whole ceremonial law, and of all the traditional constitutions. Which accomplishments must finish his character among his countrymen; must open his way to some of the first honours of the nation; and give him a name among those worthies who were reputed *the excellent of the earth*. But what others counted gain, this he counted loss for Christ.

Not in the *eminency* of his *gifts*, nor in the *extent* of his *usefulness*, as a Christian minister.—He had been caught up into the third heaven; had heard the words of God, and seen the vision of the Almighty; had wrought all manner of wonders, and signs, and mighty deeds.—What was still more valuable, he had planted churches, and converted souls. His labours were gone out into all lands, and his words unto the ends of the earth.—Yet all these acquirements before the infinite God, were *defective*; all

* Acts xxii. 3. † Chap. xxvi. 5.

these performances, in point of justification, were *insufficient*; therefore in *none* of these he gloried.—Which reminds me of the second inquiry.

II. In what the apostle *did* glory.—He gloried in a cross. Strange! What so *scandalous* as a cross? On a cross rebellious slaves were executed. The cross was *execrable* among men, and *accursed* even by God *. Yet the apostle glories in the cross.—Crucifixion not being used among us, the expression does not sound so *harsh*; neither is the idea so *horrid*. But to the ear of a Galatian, it conveyed much the same meaning, as if the apostle had gloried in a halter, gloried in the gallows, gloried in a gibbet †.

“Stupid creature! (perhaps some may reply), to undervalue the most substantial endowments, and glory in “infamy itself!”—But stop a moment, and hear the apostle farther. He glories in the cross of Christ; that illustrious person, who was anointed to be the all-instructing Prophet, the all atoning Priest, and the all-conquering King of the church.—In the cross of Christ Jesus; who,

* Gal. iii. 13.

† Some persons, I am informed, were disgusted at these words, *halter, gallows, gibbet*. They are so horridly contemptible!—To whom I would reply; That the cross, in point of ignominy and torment, included *all this*, and *more*. Unless the English reader forms to himself some such image, he will never be able to apprehend the scandalous nature, and shocking circumstances, of his divine Master's death.

The words, I must confess, were diversified, and the sentiment was reiterated, on purpose to affect the mind with this astonishing truth. Neither can I prevail upon myself to expunge the expressions; unless I could substitute others of a more ignominious and execrable import. Only I would beg of the serious reader, to spend a moment in the following reflection:—“Is it so? That a polite and delicate ear can hardly endure so much as the *sound* of the words? How amazing then was the condescension! How charming and adorable the goodness of God's illustrious Son; to *bear* all that is signified by these intolerably vile terms! Bear it *willingly*, bear it *cheerfully*, for us men, and our salvation!”

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by the discharge of all those important offices, should save his people from the dominion of sin, and from the damnation of hell.—In the cross of Christ Jesus, our Lord; and not ours only, but Lord of all. *Who doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth**. *Who hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS†*.

And is it possible for any human heart, to contemplate the cross of so divine a Being, and not to glory? Is it possible to say, “Angels, he rules over you; but he died “on a cross for me;” and not exult in such transporting beneficence?—This will be more evident, if we examine,

III. What *reason* the apostle had, to glory in the cross of Christ.—The cross, though in itself an ignominious tree; yet being the cross of Christ, is infinitely ennobled. It becomes the tree of life. It bears the divinest fruit. Its clusters are all spiritual and heavenly blessings. Two or three of those clusters, you will permit me to select; and may the God of all mercy make them better than a feast to every humble soul!

One blessing is the *pardon of sin*. The pardon of *all* sin, original and actual: sin that is remembered, and sin that is forgotten: sin, however circumstanced, or however aggravated. The pardon of all was purchased by the death of Christ,—completely purchased;—so that, against the true believer, sin shall never rise up in judgment; shall not so much as be mentioned unto him (a); shall be done away, as though it had never been. For thus saith the ambassador of the Prince of peace; *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things (b)*.—Oh my soul! my guilty soul! what are all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, compared with this ineffable blessing! Yet this is but one among a multitude.

* Dan. iv. 35. † Rev. xix. 16.

(a) Ezek. xviii. 22. (b) Acts xiii. 38.

Another benefit, accruing from the cross of Christ, is, *reconciliation with God*.—When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son (c). Not pardoned only, but accepted from a state of enmity, restored to a state of favour; even that favour, which is better than life (d).—A privilege of such superlative excellency, that it was celebrated in the hymns of angels. When the heavenly host uttered a song, this was the subject of their harmonious joy; *Glory be to God in the highest; and on earth peace; good will towards men* (e). “By the birth of this wonderful child, and the death he shall sustain, peace is made between heaven and earth. And not peace only, but a divine friendship* commences. God regards the poor apostate race of men, not only without indignation, but with complacency and delight. He rejoices over them, to do them good (f)

Another benefit is *holiness*; or, if you please, the true, the Christian morality.—Let none think, the believer in Jesus disparages true morality. True morality is the image of the blessed God. It is most charmingly delineated throughout the whole Bible. It is the beginning of heaven in the human soul. And its proper origin is from the cross of our divine Master.—For, through the merits of his

(c) Rom. v. 10. (d) Psal. lxxiii. 4. (e) Luke ii. 14.

* There seems to be a beautiful *gradation*, in this angelic hymn. *Good-will* is more expressive, and denotes a richer blessing than *peace*.—The original *Eudokia*, is a word of the most amiable and noble meaning. It signifies a very *high esteem*, and a very *tender benevolence*. By a word of the same import, the almighty Father expresses his infinite satisfaction, in the person and undertaking of his beloved Son, Matth. iii. 17.

(f) Deut. xxviii. 63.

Would my reader have the liveliest paraphrase on this passage? or see the actings of this divine complacency, described with inimitable delicacy? Let him attend to the prophet Ze-
phaniah: *The Lord thy God, in the midst of thee, is mighty. He will save: he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing*, chap. iii. 17.

death,

death, sinners are made partakers of the holy Spirit; who writes upon their hearts, and makes legible in their conversation, what was anciently written upon the mitre of the high priest, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.—And oh! what a *motive* is the cross of Christ to the exercise of every virtue! “He died; my Lord, my Judge, my King, died; to *re-* deem me from all iniquity, and make me zealous of good works.” How powerfully, far beyond any naked instructions, or abstract reasonings, do such considerations invite us—urge us—constrain us (*g*), to renounce all ungodliness, and adorn the gospel of God our Saviour!

Another blessing is, *victory over death*—This also is the fruit of that once detested, but now ever beloved tree. For thus it is written; *That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil: and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage* (*i*). The devil is said to have the *power of death*, because, by tempting, too successfully, our first parents, he brought death into the world; because, by tempting their posterity to sin, and too often prevailing, he arrays death in horror; he arms death with its sting. But Christ, by expiating our guilt, has disarmed this last enemy; has taken away its sting; and made it not loss, but gain to die (*k*).—The gay, and the healthy, know not how to form an estimate of this deliverance. Nor can any words of mine describe it, with proper energy. Go to dying beds; there you will learn its true worth. Ask some agonizing friend; he, and he alone, can tell you, what a blessing it is, to have the king of terrors converted into a messenger of peace.

One blessing more I would mention, and earnestly wish it, in due time, to all my hearers; *An entrance into hea-*

(*g*) 2 Cor. v. 14.

Religion! Thou the soul of happiness;
And groaning Calvary, of Thee! *There* shine
The noblest truths; *there* strongest motives sting!
There, sacred violence assaults the soul;
There, nothing but *compulsion* is forborn.

Night Thoughts, N. IV.

(*i*) Heb. ii. 14. 15.

(*k*) Phil. i. 21.

ven. This too is the produce of our Redeemer's cross.—St John saw a bright assembly of happy beings, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, rejoicing before the throne of God. *These*, said one of the venerable elders, *are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne (l).—They came out of great tribulation:* They suffered, it is probable, in the service of Christ. Perhaps, they laid down their lives for his sake. But *this* was not their passport into the regions of bliss.—*They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb:* They had applied to their own souls, the merit and atonement of the crucified Jesus. By *this* means, they were presented without spot and blameless; on *this* account, they were admitted to “see the King of heaven in his beauty (*m*)”, and to be ever, ever, with the Lord.

Since then the cross of Christ was demonstrative of such stupendous *love*; since it is productive of benefits, innumerable, invaluable, and eternal; was there not a cause, for the apostle to glory on his behalf?—Nay, might not the very stones have cried out, to reproach him with insensibility and ingratitude, if he had neglected to glory in the cross of Christ?—And since this love was shewed, these benefits were procured, not for *him* only, but for *us*, and for all generations; does not this afford me an opportunity, of applying the doctrine to each particular hearer?

—1. Let me address, or rather let me congratulate, my brethren in the ministry.—Though you cannot controul the laws of nature; though you cannot see into the secrets of futurity; you have the same cause of glorying, with the very chiefest of the apostles. A cause of glorying, which that holy man of God esteemed, far above all such miraculous abilities. You have the cross of Christ,

For your *study*, as *men*:

For your *hope*, as *Christians*:

For your *preaching*, as *ministers*.

For your *study*, as *men*. Here, the reasoning faculties

(l) Rev. vii. 9. 14. 15.

(m) 1st. xxxiii. 17.

may exert themselves, with everlasting improvement, and everlasting delight.—Here, we contemplate the wonders, the unparalleled wonders, of a God made man : dying, as a pattern of patience ; as a martyr for truth ; as an all perfect sacrifice for sin.—Here the Lord JEHOVAH hath fully granted what his servant Moses (*n*) so earnestly requested : he hath made all his glory to pass before the astonished eyes of angels, and of men.—Here *justice* has set her most awful terrors in array ; even while *goodness* appears, with inexpressible loveliness, and the most attractive beauty. Here, *truth*, more unshaken than a rock, takes her immoveable stand ; and *mercy*, tenderer than the mother's tear, yearns with bowels of everlasting pity.—In a word ; the cross of Christ is a conspicuous theatre, on which all the divine perfections unite, and harmonize, and shine forth with transcendent lustre.

As *Christians*, we have, in the cross of Christ, the richest provision for our own spiritual wants. This is a foundation of the sublimest *hope*, and a fountain of the most exuberant *joy*. This affords matter for the deepest *humility*, and yields fuel for the most flaming *love*. Faith in our crucified Jesus, is an ever-active principle of the most cheerful and exact *obedience* : is an ample and inexhaustable magazine, from which we may fetch arms to conquer, absolutely conquer, the allurements of the world, the sollicitations of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil.—By this, a way is opened for us into the holy of holies ; and what may we not venture to ask, what may we not expect to receive, who have the blood of the everlasting covenant to plead, in all our approaches to the throne of grace ?—Having, therefore, such an high-priest ; having in his cross unsearchable riches ; who shall make our glorying void ? What shall hinder us from rejoicing and saying, “ Blessed be God, for these opening beauties of spring ! “ Blessed be God for the expected fruits of autumn ! Blessed be God, for ten thousand thousand gifts of his indulgent providence ! But *above all*, blessed be God, for the cross of Christ ! ”

(*n*) Exod. xxxiii. 18.

As ministers of the gospel, we are not left to set before our hearers, a system of refined Heathenism; or to entertain them with cold, spiritless lectures of virtue. No; we have the infinitely tender love, the immensely free grace, of the bleeding dying Immanuel, to display—to improve—to enforce. And is there a topic, in the whole compass of oratory; is there an argument, amidst all the stores of reason; so admirably calculated to touch the finest movements of the soul? To strike all the inmost springs of action, with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy?—Would we alarm the *supine*, or intimidate the *presumptuous*? We may call them to behold God's own Son, weltering in blood; God's own Son, transfixed with the arrows of justice. We may bid them consider; if judgment begins with the immaculate Mediator, where shall the irreclaimable sinner appear? How will he escape the stroke, how bear the weight, of God's everlasting vengeance?—Would we comfort the distressed? We may point them to an atonement, whose merits are infinite, and able to save to the very uttermost (o). We may lead them to a righteousness, whose efficacy is unbounded, and sufficient to justify the ungodly. And what balm can be so sovereign, for a wounded conscience?—Are we to support the weak, and animate the doubting? Here, we may shew them promises; free promises*; exceeding great and precious promises; ratified by the oath of JEHOVAH, and sealed by the blood of his Son, and what cordials can be so restorative to the drooping Christian?

In short; the doctrine of the cross, is suited to answer all the great ends of our ministry, and promote all the truly valuable interests of our people. By this, the holy Spirit delights to work. And this, O Satan, *shall be thy plague*: this O sin, *shall be thy destruction* †.—However, therefore, the cross might be to the Jews a stumbling-block, and

* Heb. viii. 25.

† To man the bleeding cross has promis'd all:
The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace:
Who gave his life, what grace will he deny?

Night Thoughts, Night IV.

‡ Hos. xiii. 14.

to the Greeks foolishness; God forbid, that *we* should glory in any thing else!—Let this be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending *, of all our public ministrations.—Let us leave a favour of this knowledge, which is far better than precious ointment, in every private company.—Let it appear, from *all* our conversation, that the affections of our heart, and the labours of our life, are devoted, wholly devoted, to our adored Redeemer's cross.—*Happy the people, who are under the care of such ministers! and blessed the ministers who walk according to this rule!*

2. Let me exhort all true believers. Those who are vile in their own eyes, and to whom Christ alone is precious.—Remember, brethren, what is written in the prophet: it is a description of your state: it is a direction for your conduct. *In the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory †.*

Let none say, that religion is a gloomy or uncomfortable state; I call upon you this day to rejoice ‡. Let none say, that religion is a mean or despicable thing; I call upon you this day to glory. And have the divine authority for both ||.—You will dishonour the blessed Jesus; you

* The author, who could write the *spirited and weighty* lines which follow, must doubtless have had this conviction deep on his heart.

———— Thou, my *all!*

My theme! my inspiration! and my crown!
 My strength in age! my rise in low estate!
 My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth!—my world!
 My light in darkness! and my life in death!
 My boast through time! bliss through eternity!
 My *sacrifice!* my *God!*—What things are these!

Night-Thoughts, Night IV.

† If. xlv. 25.

‡ 'Tis this makes *Christian triumph*, a command:

'Tis this makes joy a *duty* to the wife.

Night-Thoughts, Night IV.

|| *Κρυξνομαι*, the word in our text, denotes the act of *rejoicing*, as well as of *glorying*. Thus it is translated, Rom. v. 11. And indeed this it always implies.—See Psal. v. 11. Psal. cxlix. 5. Sept. Translat.

will

will disparage his surpassing excellency; if you do not confide in him, and make your boast of him.—Christ is King of heaven; Christ is Judge of the world; Christ is God over all. And of such a Saviour shall we not glory? Yes, verily: and in all circumstances, and on every occasion.

Amidst your manifold infirmities, glory in Christ. For though he was crucified in weakness, he hath all power in heaven and earth. And it is written before him; it is one of his immutable decrees; *Sin shall not have dominion over you* *.—Amidst your various failings, glory in Christ. For his righteousness covers all your imperfections; his righteousness secures you from wrath and condemnation; and, though deficient in yourselves, you are complete in him †.—Under the pressure of tribulations, lift up your heads, and glory in the cross. Because the Captain of your salvation, was made perfect through sufferings. If you suffer with him, you shall also reign with him. And the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the happiness, which Christ hath purchased with his agonies, and will quickly bestow on his people.—When death approaches; death, that cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible among the kings of the earth; do you still glory in the cross. Adhering to this banner, you may boldly and triumphantly say; *O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory* ‡?—When that great, tremendous day shall come; which puts an end to

* Rom. vi. 14. † Col. ii. 10.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 55. This is evidently the language of a conqueror, addressed to some formidable, but vanquished enemy. —We shall form no improper idea of this significant and beautiful passage, if we picture to ourselves the good apostle, in the attitude of those Hebrew captains, who set their feet on the necks of the five Canaanitish kings. Josh. x. 24. If we suppose him in such a posture, to utter this animated exclamation, or rather this pious insult, over the two grand, but prostrate adversaries of mankind: "*O death! where is now thy sting? Since Christ has expiated sin, by the sacrifice of himself? O grave where is now thy victory? Since Christ is both risen himself, and has ascertained to his people a joyful resurrection?*"

time

time and terrestrial things; when that awful, that majestic voice, is heard, which commands all the race of Adam to appear at the bar; *then*, my dear brethren in Christ, *then* also shall you glory in the cross. When others, in an agony of terror, call upon rocks to fall on them, and mountains to overwhelm them; this shall be your sedate appeal; rather this shall be your heroic challenge: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died* *.—I *h*. n shall you enter the harbour of eternal rest; not like a shipwrecked mariner, cleaving to some broken plank, and hardly escaping the raging waves; but like some stately vessel, with all her sails expanded, and riding before a prosperous gale †.

3. Let me caution the *self-righteous*. Those, who more frequently think of their own piety than of Christ's obedience; are more apt to cry out with the Pharisee, *I am no extortioner, no adulterer*; than to confess with the publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner*.—What shall I say to these persons? Let me not be thought censorious, when my only aim is to be faithful. Beware, I beseech you, lest you build for eternity, not on a *rock*, but on the *sand*. However you may appear in your own sight; before the adorable majesty of the everlasting God, before the consummate perfection of his holy law, you are less than nothing, you are worse than nothing. You are, indeed you are, deficiency and sin. Renounce, therefore, renounce all dependance on self. Trust no longer in a refuge of lies: lest all your admired attainments, at the day of final retribution, be like straw, and hay, and stubble, in Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace.—Imitate the blessed penman

* Rom. viii. 33. 34.

† St Peter's expression. Εισοδος πλεσιως επισημνηθησεται, is perhaps too nervous, and too noble, to admit of an *adequate* translation. The above comparison is, I think, a very pertinent illustration of the delicate sentiment, and the delightful doctrine. A ship wafted into the port, under the full influence of wind and tide, seems to afford the finest representation of a large, a rich, an abundant entrance, 2 Pet. i. 11.

of my text. Are you blameless in your external carriage? So was he. Are you exemplary in many points? So was he. Yet all this righteousness he *accounted but dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord* *. — Be this your pattern. Write *emptiness* upon your own duties; *emptiness* upon your own works; and you shall be filled with all the fulness of God your Saviour. Every other cause of glorying will be like the morning-cloud, or the early dew, which passeth away †. But this cause of glorying, will *stand fast for evermore as the moon, and as the faithful witness in heaven* ‡.

Can I conclude, without adding a word of admonition to the wicked? Those I mean, who are enemies to the cross of Christ; who mind earthly things; but neither hunger nor thirst after righteousness. — My soul remembers the wormwood and the gall of such a state; and cannot but tenderly pity these unhappy people. — Alas! my friends, what have you to glory in? The devil and his angels expect, ere long, to glory in your destruction. Those malignant fiends are eyeing you, as their prey, and are impatient to begin your torment. Great, inexpressibly great, is your danger. The Lord almighty open your eyes to discern it. — Nevertheless your case is not desperate. You may yet be delivered, *as a bird out of the snare of the fowler*. Look unto the crucified Jesus. *Why* does he hang on that bloody tree? *Why* are his hands pierced with iron? *Why* is his body racked with pain? *Why* his heart torn with anguish? It is for *you*, sinners, for *you*. That blood is poured out, to cleanse *you* from guilt. Those wounds are sustained, to heal *your* consciences. That anguish is endured, to obtain rest for *your* souls. — In that mangled body *dwells all the fulness of the Godhead* ||. Great, beyond imagination great, is the merit of those sufferings. Why then, O! why will you die? Why will you perish for ever; who have an all-sufficient propitiation in the cross of Christ. Fly to this sanctuary. Fly, before it be too late. Fly, without a moment's delay. It is an inviolable

* Phil. iii. 8.

† Hos. vi. 4.

‡ Psal. lxxxix. 37.

|| Col. ii. 9.

sanctuary. None ever perished, that fled by faith to the compassionate, the divinely compassionate Redeemer.— His death shall be a full satisfaction for your iniquities. A sense of his immensely rich goodness shall win your affections; shall incline, (what all the threatenings of damnation could never effect), shall incline you, to lothe your sins, and to love his service; shall smoothe your path, and expedite your progress, to the regions of immortal honour and joy.

Having now, with great plainness of speech, addressed my brethren in the ministry; having exhorted *believers*; cautioned the *self-righteous*; and warned the *wicked*: let me commend the whole to your serious recollection, and to God's gracious benediction.—And, “O Lord most holy! O God most mighty! O holy and merciful Saviour! “by thine agony and bloody sweat—by thy cross and passion—let not the word, now spoken, be in vain in the “Lord!” *Amen and Amen.*

The

The ensuing THREE SERMONS were preached on PUBLIC FAST-DAYS; to which the AUTHOR prefixed these following reasons for their publication, by way of PREFACE *.

SHOULD any one ask, "*Why does this author publish his sermons, when the fast is gone and forgotten?*"—For this very reason he publishes, that the fast, though gone, may not be forgotten; that we may remember the sins we confessed, and the miseries we deprecated; remember the vows of God, which are still upon us; and the snares of death which are still around us.

Should it be further asked, "*Why does he obtrude himself on the public, when so many eminent writers have already made their appearance? Does he bring with him any distinguished excellency of composition? any superior force of argument, or uncommon delicacy of sentiment?*" No such thing. He pretends to nothing refined or extraordinary: he affects neither brilliant thought, nor polished style; equally remote from nice criticism, and profound learning, his discourses are studiously plain, and brought down to the level of the meanest capacity.

"*What then is his motive?*"—This is the very truth. In several of the sermons published on this occasion, the one thing needful seems to be overlooked. Christ and his free grace, Christ and his great salvation, are either totally omitted, or but slightly touched.—Where these are but slightly touched, the door of hope and the city of refuge are shewn as it were through a mist, dimly and indistinctly. We have no more than a transient glimpse of the desirable objects; and only so much light as is sufficient to bewilder, rather than direct.—Where they are totally omitted, the door of hope is barred, and the city of refuge withdrawn from our view. In this case, being without Christ, we are without consolation, and may justly complain,

* These sermons were first published in August 1757.

with the mourning prophet, The Comforter that should relieve our souls, is far off.

Through the following discourses, a constant regard is paid to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; to his all-atoning blood, and his everlasting righteousness; which are the grand means, both of comforting our hearts, and sanctifying our nature.—Indeed the principal aim of the whole is, to display the unsearchable riches of Christ, the matchless efficacy of his death, and that perfect freeness with which all his invaluable benefits are bestowed.—To those who believe he is precious; and to those who are convinced of sin, these salutary truths will be their own best recommendation. Such readers will excuse a multitude of blemishes, provided they find Jesus, who was crucified; Jesus, who is the desire of all nations; Jesus, than whom no other foundation can be laid, either for present holiness, or future happiness.

As these sermons were not preached to gratify a curious taste; neither are they published with any fond prospect of reforming a sinful nation. Sincerely as the author loves his country, and ardently as he desires the salvation of his countrymen, he is not so vainly sanguine in his expectations.—But this he will venture to assert, that, if ever a reformation is produced, it must, under the influences of the eternal Spirit, be produced by the doctrines of free grace, and justification through a Redeemer's righteousness. Till these doctrines are generally inculcated, the most eloquent harangues from the pulpit, or the most correct dissertations from the press, will be no better than a pointless arrow, and a broken bow.

This also he will venture to hope, that the discourses may here and there meet with some poor sinner, who is smitten with a sense of guilt, and alarmed with apprehensions of danger; who desires nothing so much as to find a resting-place, where he may be free from the terrors of conscience, and safe in the day of trouble. This freedom and this safety are to be found only, are to be found infallibly, in the blessed Jesus, and the blood of sprinkling. If such a reader, by the following pages, is conducted to this divine sanctuary, the writer is satisfied, is rewarded, enjoys the utmost of his wishes.

Then, instead of soliciting the voice of fame, or coveting the wreath of honour; instead of giving himself any concern a-

*bout the officious critic ; he will thankfully adore that almighty hand which confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers *. For, Oh ! how insipid is the praise of men, compared with the exalted pleasure of glorifying God, and edifying an immortal soul ! How harmless is defamation from a fellow-creature, when our great Creator smiles ; and is pleased by weak things, and by things that are despised †, to accomplish the purposes of his infinite grace, and everlasting love !*

* If. xliv. 26. † 1 Cor. i. 27. 28.

S f 2

S E R-

S E R M O N III.

T H E

T I M E O F D A N G E R .

Preached on a public FAST-DAY.

HEB. xi. 28.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch them.

IF we consult the history to which these words refer, we shall find the Israelites in a state of great affliction. The Egyptians oppressed them; very heavily laid the yoke upon them; and made their *lives bitter with hard bondage*. — The misery of his people God pities, and is resolved to redress. Accordingly he sends Moses, in the quality of his ambassador, to demand their release. The king of Egypt most insolently replies, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* God, to chastise his insolence and obstinacy, inflicts a variety of plagues on him and his subjects. In contempt of all which Pharaoh hardens his heart, persists in his disobedience, and *refuses to let the people go*. — At last, says the Lord, *I will bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt* *, which shall infallibly accomplish my purpose. Be their hearts hard as the nether millstone, this shall make them feel; be their resolution stubborn as an iron sinew, this shall make it bend: *About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die* †.

But as the Israelites then dwelt in Egypt, how should they be safe amidst the general desolation? — Will it be said,

* Exod. xi. 1.

† Chap. xi. 4. 5.

The Israelites, being the people of God, were not exposed to this punishment; had no reason to fear the infliction of this vengeance?—None, that remembers how all the world is become guilty before God, will affirm this: none, that considers how rebellious and idolatrous the Israelites were, can suppose this. And every one who has read Ezek. xx. 8 †. must allow, that there was no difference in this respect. The one people were criminal, as well as the other. All of them most righteously deserved the afflictive stroke. Grace, free and sovereign grace alone, must make the distinction.

Since this was the case, it may reasonably be asked, how shall the Israelites be safe?

The Lord himself directs Moses to a method, which should effectually secure all the families of Israel, while death entered into every habitation of the Egyptians. The method—its execution—and success—are all specified in the text: *By faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch them.* Where we may observe,

I. A very dreadful danger, signified by the *destruction of the first-born.*

II. A method of security from this danger, effected by *keeping the passover, and the blood of sprinkling.*

III. The success of this method, denoted by the destroyer not so much as *touching them.*

The good Lord enable us to open and apply the words thus divided! Then we shall see their suitableness to the present occasion, and, I hope, feel their salutary influence on our souls.

I. A very dreadful danger, signified by the *destruction*

† But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not, every man, cast away the abominations of his eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish mine anger against them, in the midst of the land of Egypt.

of

of the first-born. The Lord had already put his hand to the sword: it was even now drawn from the scabbard, and had received a commission to go forth; to go forth that very night; to walk through all the land of Egypt; and to be bathed before the morning-light, in the blood of the first-born; *all* the first-born, from the haughty king that sat on the throne, even to the slave that toiled at the mill, and the very sheep that yeaned in the field.—Tremendous, as well as inevitable blow! O, what an alarm will it create, and what affliction will it spread! make every heart sad, and every house a scene of mourning! *There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more*.*

And is not the present time a time of imminent danger? Are not the judgments of the Almighty now abroad in the world? Have not earthquakes shaken kingdoms, and rent the foundations of nature? Have they not spread terror through our own and distant nations; laid wealthy towns and magnificent cities in ruin; and swallowed up or destroyed unknown multitudes of our fellow-creatures?

Is not the sword of slaughter drawn? has not war hung out her bloody flag? are not the flames kindled in Europe and America, on the land and on the ocean? are they not gathering strength daily, spreading their rage continually, and threatening to over-run all?

If we were evidently superior to our enemies, in number and power, in vigilance and unanimity; yet the events of military undertakings are very uncertain: *The battle is not always to the strong* †. Success and victory depend upon a hand higher far than the arm of flesh; *Without me*, saith the Lord, *they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain* ‡.

But are we not at war with one of the most potent, insidious, enterprising kingdoms in the world? Is there not great reason to suppose, that they will soon be joined by their neighbours the Spaniards? And if we have been worsted by one, how shall we contend with their united force?—Considering the situation and behaviour of the

* Exod. xi. 6.

† Eccl. ix. 11.

‡ Is. x. 4.

ungrateful Austrians, have we not cause to suspect the junction of a third Popish power, against our religion and liberty? Will not the court of Rome, with all her bigotted adherents, urge and instigate them to be active in this confederacy *? Will they not, at this juncture—the most favourable for the prosecution of their purpose, that any age has afforded, or their own sanguine zeal can desire—will they not exert their utmost ability, to crush the Protestant cause, and extirpate the Protestant name †?

Should the enemy make a descent upon our island, what can we expect, but that our island be turned into a field of blood? They, who have always been jealous of our interest and influence, have now added rage to their jealousy. Their resentment, like the burning fiery furnace, is heated seven times hotter than usual. We should certainly find them, as the scripture speaks, *a bitter and hasty nation* ‡; and, without the spirit of prophecy, may venture to declare, Wo be to England, if God should now deliver it into the hands of the French.

Some, perhaps, may cry, “ These fears are all chimerical; there is no ground for such discouraging suggestions; we do not question, but we shall be a match, and

* I am informed, that when the Pope heard of the alliance lately established between the houses of Bourbon and Austria, Hungary and Bohemia, strengthened by the unexpected accession of Russia, he cried out, with an air of triumph; *O admirabile commercium generis humani!* “ Admirable association and “ intercourse of mankind!” promising himself, I suppose, from this remarkable turn of affairs, such advantages to the cause and interests of Popery, as exceeded even all his hopes.

† The French and Austrian ministers, it seems, have long been concerting measures, to tear up the reformed religion by the roots, and not to leave a Protestant upon the face of the earth. This execrable plot is discovered by the sagacity and activity of the king of Prussia; is averred and proved in the memorials lately published by his Majesty. If that hero and his army should fall before their enemies, what can hinder the execution of this horrid design? It may puzzle the acutest politician to assign any *human* means sufficient to stand as a barrier.

‡ Hab. i. 6.

“ more

“ more than a match, for our adversaries.”——To this confident boasting, let not my tongue, but let the course of events, let the disposals of Providence reply.——Have we, then, been superior in the day of trial? Alas! have we not lost Minorca? Is not Oswego gone? a general slain, and his army cut in pieces? an admiral condemned to be shot to death, and his fleet defeated by an inferior number of the enemy's ships? Are not ravages and depredations made almost continually upon our colonies in America, and horrible unheard-of cruelties committed by the savages on the persons of our fellow-subjects? What have we reaped from the late campaign, but disappointment, loss, and shame?

Are not all these things apparently against us? Will they not dispirit our men, and embolden our foes? Will they not make our allies backward to come in with their succours; and render the powers that are unengaged, afraid to declare themselves on our side?

All these circumstances considered, the present time appears to be a time of uncommon danger. Affairs, look where-ever we will, wear a lowering aspect. *Our sky is black with clouds, and there is the sound of abundance of rain* *. Judgments seem, more than seem, to be hovering all around us. How soon they may fall, God only knows!

If God indeed were for us, we might trust, and not be afraid; we might look danger in the face, and boldly say, Who shall be against us †?——But is this the case? Are we a righteous nation, that keepeth the truth ‡? Is there sufficient reason to believe, that the holy One of Israel is our defence?——Are we not, on the contrary, a sinful generation, a people laden with iniquity? Is there not abundant reason to fear, lest our God should say, in terrible indignation, They are joined to idols; let them alone ||?——In order to determine this point, let us examine our ways. Nothing can be more proper for a day of humiliation. Are

* 1 Kings xviii. 41. † Rom. viii. 31. ‡ Is. xxvi. 2.
|| Hos. iv. 17.

not we, like the Egyptians, in a state of great danger, if we consider,

1. The *sins* of our nation.
2. The *judgments* of God denounced upon such sins.
3. The *certain execution* of those judgments, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

1. Consider the *sins* of our nation. Here I shall mention some, and only some, of those abominations, which, where-ever they are found, cannot fail to provoke the eyes of God's glory, and render either a person or a people ripe for his vengeance.

The *Christian Sabbath* is an inestimable privilege to the church of Christ; it is a happy means of building us up in knowledge, of establishing us in faith, and preparing us for our everlasting rest.—Yet is it not shamefully profaned in city and in country? What multitudes waste it in idleness, or squander it away in unedifying conversation; making it by far the most useless and contemptible day of the week?—This they do, even though God strictly charges, saying, *Remember ye the Sabbath-day*, not barely to abstain from your ordinary works, but *to keep it holy**; devoting it entirely to holy purposes, and religious exercises.—This they do, even though God solemnly threatens, saying, *If ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath-day; then will I kindle a fire in your gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched*†.

Is not the *name of God* great, wonderful, and holy? Ought it not to be used with the deepest veneration, and magnified above all things? But is it not audaciously dishonoured, and impiously blasphemed? dishonoured by customary and wanton, blasphemed by false and perfidious swearing? Has not the most high God declared, that he will in no wise hold such daring wretches guiltless? Yet how do these daring wretches swarm, like the locusts of society, in our polluted land? O England, how is thy air tainted with this breath of the infernal pit! how do thy streets resound, most horribly-resound, with this language

* Exod. xx. 8.

† Jer. xvii. 27.

of hell ! And will not the almighty Lord make thee know—know, by bitter experience, what that meaneth, which is spoken by his prophet, *Because of swearing the land mourneth* * ; mourneth under afflicting visitations, and desolating judgments.

Is not the *scripture* a singular blessing ? Yes ; it is celebrated by the Psalmist, as the sovereign blessing ; that which crowns the other instances of divine goodness : *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel*. It is also celebrated as a most distinguishing blessing, from which multitudes are excluded : *He hath not dealt so with all nations, neither have the Heathen knowledge of his laws* †. Should not then the scripture be precious to our souls ; more precious than fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, and the droppings of the honey-comb ? Should we not exercise ourselves in it day and night ‡ ; reading it by day, meditating on it by night ? Should we not make it the most delightful subject of our conversation ? talk of it to our children, our domestics, our neighbours ; when we lie down, and rise up ; when we walk by the way, and sit in the house ¶ ?—But where are the persons who bear such a superlative esteem for the Bible ? Where is the company that delights to converse on those oracles of truth ? Where are the parents that diligently instruct their children, and feed them with the milk of the word ? Diversion of every kind engages their attention, and the most trifling impertinence employs their tongue ; but the Lord's word is insipid, if not irksome. His word is treated even by Protestants as the manna was treated by the Israelites ; who had the ingratitude and impudence to say, *Our soul loatheth this light bread* §. A plague from the Lord of hosts was the consequence of their contemptuous treatment of the meat that perisheth. Of how much sorer punishment shall we be thought worthy, who condemn the food which endureth to everlasting life !

God hath reserved the unjust, faith the scripture, unto the day of judgment, to be punished ; *chiefly those who walk*

* Jer. xxiii. 10. † Psal. cxlvii. 19. 20. ‡ Psal. i. 2.
 ¶ Deut. vi. 7. § Numb. xxi. 5.

after the flesh, in the lusts of uncleanness *. Is not this iniquity rampant among the inhabitants of England? What lewd pictures are exposed to view! what filthy writings are suffered to see the light! fewel for lust, and incentives to debauchery!—What is wit, in our days, but either some lascivious hint, or some licentious abuse of scripture? Are not the wanton entertainments of the stage, and other seminaries of lewdness, countenanced, supported, thronged? Can you acquit our cities and towns of drunkenness, revellings, and abominable excesses? Are not these, and all sorts of filthiness, found in our skirts? If so, hear the word of the Lord, and let it sink deep into every heart: *When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this* †?

Is not religion, vital religion, very much upon the decline? does it not, even among the serious, wear a sickly dying aspect? What multitudes profess to know God, but in works deny him; and, quite destitute of the power of godliness, content themselves with the mere form? Whereas, if any, in imitation of the first believers and preachers, are fervent in spirit, serving the Lord with alacrity and zeal; these persons, instead of being encouraged, are opposed; instead of being esteemed, are reproached.—Of such persons even the malignant spirit could bear witness, *These are the servants of the most high God, who shew unto us the way of salvation* ‡. But among us, who call ourselves Christians, who pique ourselves upon being the purest church in Christendom; among us such persons are deemed the visionaries of the age, the disturbers of society, the men that would *turn the world upside down* ||. The ministers who are most faithful, and the people who are most exemplary, are a derision and a by-word among their neighbours. Thus, in Israel, *they*

* 2 Pet. ii. 10. † Jer. v. 7.-8. 9. ‡ Acts xvi. 17.
|| Chap. xvii. 6.

mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets. But it was to the confusion of those scoffers, and the ruin of their country: For the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary; and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age.*

Are we not abandoned to a spirit of carnal confidence? When do we discover any reliance on the Almighty, or ascribe any of our success to his gracious interposition? It is not God, but our sword, that shall help us. Or, if any unseen power is acknowledged, it is not the Lord of hosts, but good fortune. One would almost imagine, that we were ashamed of a heavenly ally; and thought it a disgrace, to own ourselves dependent on Omnipotence. Is not such a temper a national infatuation, and the harbinger of national judgments? Zedekiah, and the men of Judah, forgot or neglected the Rock of their salvation, and made Pharaoh's army their confidence. But see what was the issue; or hear it from the mouth of him who fulfilleth the word of his servants: *Though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire†.*

Should you say, This is a false charge: have we not, this very day, publicly acknowledged, that, "without the divine aid, the wisest counsels of frail men, and the multitude of an host, and all the instruments of war, are but weak and vain?" Have we not likewise expressly declared, that, "not confiding in the splendor of any thing that is great, or the stability of any thing that is strong here below, we do more humbly flee to the Lord for succour, and put our trust under the shadow of his wings?†" I would to God we believed that acknowledgment, and acted conformably to this declaration. We should then be very diligent to propagate religion among

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. 17. † Jer. xxxvii. 10.

† The form of prayer appointed for the fast.

our soldiers and sailors; we should seek for such officers, and commanders, as are men fearing God: we should be as desirous to establish our troops in godliness, as to train them up in military discipline. But is it thus with our army? is it thus with our navy? Visit a man of war. You will think yourself, not in one of the bulwarks of our island, but in a little hell. Observe the gentlemen of the sword. Concerning the generality of them you will have reason to ask, Are these Christians? are they not incarnate devils *?—And can we expect, that the infinitely pure God will go forth with such hosts? will he not rather become *their enemy, and fight against them* †?

What ignorance prevails, especially among the lower ranks of people? The grossest ignorance of themselves, and of God our Saviour; the grossest ignorance of grace and salvation by a Redeemer's righteousness; the grossest ignorance of the very first principles of our holy religion. To do evil, they are wise: but to do good, to believe in Jesus Christ, to love and glorify him who bought sinners with his blood, to do all, to do any of this, they have no knowledge. And is it a small matter to be thus *children of darkness*? Is not the soul alienated from the life of God through ignorance ‡? Does not this displease the most high God, and provoke the holy One of Israel? Let his own word determine; *It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them, will shew them no favour* ||. Are these impotent menaces? made only to be contemned? Then we may dismiss our fears. But if they are the word of God, which

* Does this sound harsh? or will any other part of the charge advanced in these discourses, prove offensive?—I am sorry there should be any occasion for such language. But I dare not retract it; I must not soften it; no, nor apologise for it. Thus much, however, I will very readily acknowledge, borrowing the words of Job, *If it be not so now, let experience make me a liar, and in this case make my speech nothing worth*, Job xxiv. 25. Desirous as I am of speaking truth, here I shall rejoice to be convicted of falsehood.

† Is. lxiii. 10. ‡ Eph. iv. 18. || Is. xxvii. 11.

liveth and abideth for ever; then we have reason to cry,
 “What will become of England?”

In a word, religion, both as to knowledge and practice, was never at so low an ebb since the reformation took place; nor luxury, and immorality of every kind, at such an enormous height.——Where now are our *rulers*? Are they zealous for God, and valiant for the truth? Have they courage to stem the torrent, or to oppose the overflowings of ungodliness?——Where are the *grandees* and *magistrates*? Warm with generous indignation, do they snatch the spear; and, like the gallant Phineas, smite through the loins of iniquity?——Alas! have not our great men *altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds* *? Are they not, generally speaking, the ringleaders in transgression; as eminent for their contempt of God, as for the affluence of their circumstances? *Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in the several trespasses* †. But will that dignity, which they have abused; will that authority, which was lent them for better purposes; will those distinctions be a security to them or their country, in the day of visitation?——Hear what the righteous Lord says, who is higher than the highest, and able to execute all his decrees: *It is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers. I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their hearts may faint, and their ruins be multiplied* ‡. Gates, be they ever so strongly fortified, or ever so faithfully guarded, are no fence against the point of JEHOVAH's sword. And if sin is suffered to enter, judgments will assuredly follow. Judgments will follow even the most powerful and wealthy sinners; will pursue them, like an eager blood-hound; will hunt them, like a dismal ghost; will force a way into their palaces, nay, into their closest retirements; and never remit the chase, till *fainting of heart* ends in *multiplied ruin*; in the ruin of themselves, their families, their country.

Amidst all these crying evils, are we not *presumptuously secure*? Is there not a deplorable spirit of stupidity, which blinds our eyes, and renders us insensible? Scarce any

* Jer. v. 5.

† Ezra ix. 2.

‡ Ezek. xxi. 14. 15.
 one

one lays these miseries and dangers to heart. Who mourneth for the abominations of the land? who stirreth up himself to call upon God, if so be he may yet be intreated, and have mercy upon Zion?—Are we not too much like the intoxicated sinners of the old world? *They eat, they drank; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded; they gave themselves wholly up to sensual gratifications and inferior cares; disregarding all the admonitions of Noah, and all the tokens of impending vengeance; till the divine long-suffering ceased, the universal flood came, and, with irresistible violence, swept them all away* *.—Are we not in the condition of those supine senseless people, spoken of by the prophet Zephaniah? *It shall come to pass at that day, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees; that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil. And may we not justly expect their awful doom? Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation. Their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them, in the day of the Lord's wrath, but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy* †.

As a farther aggravation of our crimes, have we not been *incorrigible*, amidst the most compulsive and the most winning motives to amendment?—We have been visited with a *contagious distemper* among our cattle; which, we were apprehensive, might have introduced a plague among the human race. From this fear we have been delivered: but are we delivered from our evil works, and have we renounced all ungodliness?—*Rebellion* broke out in our island;

* Luke xvii. 27. † Zeph. i. 12. &c.

Tremend'ous threatening! *black as night it stands,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shakes a dreadful dart;*

Milton.

Even the dart of divine indignation over a guilty land. Yet who is awakened from a state of indolence? who is induced to watch and pray? who falls down at the feet of *JEHOVAH*, though they see his wrath enkindling, and hear his terrors denounced?

threatening

threatening to overthrow our Protestant government, and deprive us of our reformed religion; threatening to deprive us of our liberty and its privileges, of our peace and its comforts. This storm also was soon blown over, and tranquillity restored to our land. But did we return every one to the Lord our God, who dealt so graciously with us?—*Earthquakes* have shattered other kingdoms, have destroyed other cities; while they only admonished, not injured, us and ours. Has this goodness, this distinguishing goodness of God, led us to repentance?—Were we not lately preserved from the most calamitous of all temporal losses? from losing the *precious fruits* of the earth. When the corn was ripe and ready for the sickle, who can forget the lowering sky, and the descending rains, which held back the husbandman's hand, and forbade the gathering? A few more days of such unseasonable weather had inevitably spoiled the produce of the ground, and destroyed the staff of life. But divine providence, at the very hour of need, restrained the immoderate showers; bid the sun shine forth with peculiar brightness, and gave us the expected weeks of the harvest. Thus rescuing us from famine, perhaps from pestilence, probably from mutiny, certainly from a train of evils, the particulars of which we cannot so much as imagine. But is there not too much ground for the complaint, so pathetically urged, and so frequently repeated, by the prophet; *Though I have done all this for you, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord* *.

Behold, now, the state of our nation.—Our sins abound, and are grown up to heaven—sins of every, even the most horrid kind—sins among all ranks, from the highest to the lowest.—In our sins we persist, though wooed, as it were, with the choicest mercies; though made to smart under various judgments; though threatened with far more afflictive visitations.——And will the great, the mighty, the immortal God, always bear with such a people? will he receive the most horrible indignities, and still, still refrain himself? Surely he will awake as one out of sleep! surely he will say, with a determined indignation, *Ah, I*

* Amos ix. 6. 8. 9. 10. 11.

will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies *! Has he not shewed us evident tokens of his displeasure? is he not filling all his dispensations with marks of anger? And what, O what may be the end of these beginnings! how doleful, how destructive! unless sovereign grace interpose; bringing us, by faith in the Son of God, to unfeigned repentance and newness of life.—Some notion we may form concerning the end of these things by unfolding the second point,

2. The judgments of God denounced on such sins.—Where such iniquities prevail, we might naturally conclude, that the divine indignation is awakened, and the divine vengeance lingereth not. Is there a God? does he behold the children of men? is his nature infinitely pure and holy? surely then he cannot, he will not suffer the most outrageous violations of his sublime perfections to pass unpunished.—Thus we might argue from the nature of God: this we might conjecture from the aspect of things. But we have a more sure word of prophecy, in this word, *the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men* †. And see! in what flaming colours, by what frightful images this wrath is represented, these judgments are described.

They are likened to a lion rending his prey. The Lord had been unto Ephraim as a moth, and unto the house of Judah as a worm. He had dispensed milder corrections; afflicting them in measure, and withholding inferior comforts. His judgments were like a moth fretting the garment, or like a worm corroding the wood. In both which cases the consumption creeps, as it were; the wasting operates silently, and proceeds slowly. Thus the chastising JEHOVAH acted; giving the people space for recollection, and looking for repentance: but no repentance was produced: they continued irreclaimable, adding sin to sin.—Then says the Lord, *I will be unto Ephraim as a lion*; which, all fierce and ravenous, rushes upon a lonely traveller. I will now come forth, as an incensed and irresistible adversary, and be as a roaring lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, who am omnipotent, will tear, will destroy them with a mighty

* If. i. 24.

† Rom. i. 18.

hand; and go away, satiated with slaughter and vengeance. I will take away both prince and people; I will take away their very place and nation; and none shall have power to effect, or courage to attempt a rescue*.—If God do thus to perverse and incorrigible Judah, why should we imagine that he will deal otherwise with perverse and incorrigible England?

They are described by a flood. Now therefore behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his chanel, and go over all his banks. And he shall pass through Judah, he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land; O Immanuel †. The king of Assyria and his army, determined to invade Judah, are signified by the waters of the river. These the Lord bringeth up; over-ruling the purposes of ambitious princes, and making even their wicked designs subservient to his holy will.—They are, like the waters of an immense flood, strong and many; their multitude innumerable, and their force unconquerable. For they shall come with all their glory; with their choicest troops, their ablest commanders, and their whole warlike artillery. He shall come up over all his chanel, and go over all his banks; from all parts of his vast dominion, his troops shall be assembled; each province shall be drained of its bravest inhabitants; and all unite to render this expedition one of the most formidable that ever was undertaken.—He shall pass through Judah; not only make inroads upon the frontiers, but push his way through the country, and penetrate the very heart of the kingdom. He shall overflow; spread terror and desolation on every side, and in every quarter. He shall go over villages, towns, cities, tribes; and bear down all before him. He shall reach even to the neck; his ravages shall extend even to the royal city, to the very gates of the metropolis; threatening destruction to the palace of the king, and the walls of the temple. The stretching out of his wings, the several detachments and parties of his victorious army, shall fill the breadth of the land with havock, slaughter, and

* Hof. v. 12. 14.

† Is. viii. 7. 8.

ruin; even of thy land, O Immanuel. Their relation to thee shall procure no favour, shall afford no protection. They have dishonoured that goodly name wherewith they were called. Therefore that goodly name shall no longer stand in the breach, but pour itself with the torrent, and render it irresistible—Such an inundation of judgments, so terrible, so destructive, have not we deserved, may not we expect?

These judgments are compared to *fire*, and to the fiercest of fires, that which glows in a furnace. *The house of Israel is to me become dross, all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace, they are even the dross of silver.* Therefore thus saith the Lord God, *Because ye are all become dross, behold therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather brass, and iron, and tin, and lead into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it: so will I gather you in mine anger, and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof* *. Astonishing words! And they are doubled! they are redoubled! in order to alarm the insensible sinners: as the sword, by being brandished in many a dreadful circle, over the criminal's head, strikes terror into his apprehensions, before it does the work of vengeance on his heart.—This generation is become *brass*, impudent in their wickedness. They have a whore's forehead: they cannot blush at their iniquities, but glory in their shame.—They are *tin*; a degenerate race, children that are corrupters. They have forsaken the good old way, and swerved from the example of their fathers.—With regard to hardness of heart, they are as *iron*: impenitent amidst all their guilt; obstinately tenacious of their vices; and not to be wrought upon by any addresses, not to be reclaimed by any expedients.—In another respect, they are as *lead*; stupid and sottish; pliable to evil, but for any good purpose unmeet, to every good work reprobate.—Because they are so exceedingly sinful, they shall be overtaken by God's anger, and surrounded by his fury; as metals cast into *the midst of a furnace*, are sur-

* Ezek. xxii. 18. 19. 20. 21.

rounded with the raging heat. The flame of this wrath shall *be blown*, as with a vehement wind, to its utmost height. In this furnace they shall *be left*, to this wrath they shall be abandoned; till, by a complication of afflictions, resembling the complication of their vices, they are overcome, subdued, and even *melted*: so melted, as to be either purged from the dross of their iniquities, or else blended together in one promiscuous ruin.

These judgments are described by the terrible representation of *an end*. An end of affluence and prosperity, of which we have gloried: an end of power and strength, in which we have trusted: an end of all national blessings, which we have not improved to God's honour, but turned into licentiousness. *Thus saith the Lord God, An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field, shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, pestilence and famine shall devour him* *. For this we have been ripening, by an unintermitted course of ungodliness and iniquity. And what can be expected by an impenitent people, hating to be reformed? What, but that judgments, which have long been suspended, should at last be inflicted? *An end is come:—it is come upon the land.* It is a national visitation; not confined to a part, but extending to the whole kingdom.—*Upon the four corners of the land.* No place shall be exempt; nothing secure; neither that which seems to be most secret, nor that which lies most remote. The vengeance is universal and inevitable.—The executioners of this vengeance take their stand, within and without, at home and abroad; so that to fly from one is only to fall into the hands of another. *He that is in the field shall find no way to escape, but shall die with the sword. He that is in the city shall obtain no protection, but famine and pestilence shall devour him.* Every city shall be a charnel house, and every field a field of blood. In city and country sin has prodigiously abounded; therefore in city and country desolation shall be made, deaths shall be multiplied, miseries shall abound.

* Ezek. vii. 2. 15.

These are some of the images, by which the judgments and the wrath of God are represented in the scriptures. But when all images are used, when fancy itself is exhausted, we may truly cry out with the psalmist, *Who knoweth the power of thine anger* * ? If God whet his glittering sword, and his hand take hold on judgment, what can withstand it, or who can sustain it ? If his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, *it shall consume the earth with her increase; it shall set on fire the foundation of the mountains, and burn to the lowest hell* †.

When *the lion has roared*, says the prophet, *who will not fear* ? When the Most High God has spoken ; spoken such terrible things in righteousness ; who will not lay them to heart ? O ! how deep is that sleep ; how deadly is that lethargy, which the voice of him who shakes the heavens does neither alarm nor awe !

Lest you should begin to say within yourselves, These threatenings are applicable only to the Jews, I proceed to shew,

3. The *certain execution* of these, or some such judgments on us, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

God is an infinite speaker. In his word, he addresses himself to all generations of men, and to every individual of the human kind, where his holy revelation is made. It is therefore a certain rule, that when any people, enlightened by the glorious gospel, become, like Jerusalem, universally and incorrigibly corrupt ; they do, in Jerusalem's doom, read their own.

God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He remembereth his threatenings, as well as his promises, to a thousand generations. Whatsoever, of either kind, happened to our forefathers, *happened to them as ensamples to us*. And *whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning*. Observe, it was written, not for our amusement, but *for our learning and admonition* † ; that we may, as in a mirror, see our own picture ; and, as from an oracle, learn our own destiny.

Is it not in a manner necessary, for the manifestation of

* Psal. xc. 11. † Deut. xxxii. 22. ‡ 1 Cor. x. 11.

God's inflexible justice, and his unalterable hatred of sin, that judgments should take their course; when iniquity rears its head, and refuses to be controuled? At such a juncture does not every one of the divine attributes cry aloud, *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; thou God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.*—And how can the justice of God, with regard to a wicked nation, be shewn, but by executing his vengeance upon them, in temporal calamities?

Consider, Sirs, the very essence of nations and political communities is temporal, purely temporal. They have no duration, no existence, but in this world. Hereafter sinners will be judged and punished singly, and in a personal capacity only. How then shall he, who is *Ruler among the nations*, maintain the dignity of his government over the kingdoms of the earth, but by inflicting national punishments, for national provocations; and, for final impenitence, total destruction?

Besides, has not the Lord always acted in this manner? Go back to the generations of old. Contemplate Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them; well watered every where, even as the garden of the Lord. Yet *this fruitful land is made barren*, those populous cities are turned into ashes, *for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein**; for their pride and idleness; for their voluptuous and wanton indulgencies. *For which things sake the wrath of God* not only has come, in former ages, and in distant nations; but in every age cometh, and in every nation will come, *upon the children of disobedience*†.

Pass over to Babylon, the grandest city that the sun ever beheld: which set calamity at defiance; saying in her heart, *I shall be a lady for ever*‡. How is she fallen! *swept with the besom of destruction*||! Not so much as a trace or footstep of her ancient glory left! And shall we be safe, when those very iniquities prevail among us, which rased the foundations of the Babylonian metropolis,

* Psal. cvii. 34.

† Col. iii. 6.

‡ Is. xlvii. 7.

|| Is. xiv. 23.

and overthrew the magnificence of the Babylonian monarchy?

Take a view of Constantinople, once the most flourishing Christian city in the world: where the first Christian emperor filled the throne, and Chrysostom, that great Christian orator, the pulpit. Then it was gloriously enlightened with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Grace and truth dwelt in it; and the beauties of holiness adorned it. But now the candlestick is removed. It is now given up to infidelity and barbarity; is now full of darkness, and cruel habitations.

Come hither then, ye careless ones, and see what desolations sin has made in the earth. On account of sin Sodom was consumed, as in a moment; Babylon is totally destroyed*; Constantinople has lost her glory. And will the

* Will any, raised in their own conceit above the vulgar level, neglect these admonitions with a smile of disdain? because they can assign the *second causes* of some such evils, as have been described, will they therefore quiet their spirits, amidst the alarming prospect of judgments from heaven?—They have heard (I make no doubt) that a midnight debauch in Babylon, and a popular sedition in Jerusalem, left the gates of the former open to Cyrus, and the walls of the latter without defence to Vespasian. Perhaps they will suppose, that the overthrow of Sodom was occasioned by the shock of an earthquake; and that the fire from heaven was produced by sulphureous exhalations.

Be the premisses ever so certain, is there any thing rational in the conclusion? Is not what we term the *course of nature*, the incessant administration of *Providence*? are not many of its ordinary appearances very evident indications of a righteous and holy government, unalterably determined to punish sin? The poverty and ignominy of the lazy vagabond; the diseases of the debauchee, and the distresses of the spendthrift; are these less manifest signs of divine displeasure, because they are the immediate effects of an evil conduct? are they not as certainly the *judicial*, the *penal*, as they are the *natural* consequences of vice?

Let those therefore who fear not judgments, compare causes
and

the Lord, the Lord God, who is unchangeably just and holy; will he spare *that* in one people, which he has so severely corrected in another? *He that chastiseth the Heathen, shall he not punish us*, when we do according to all their abominations?

Have *we* a license to sin with impunity? are our sins less heinous than those of other people? Quite the reverse. Considering the many blessings which we enjoy as a nation; the many deliverances we have enjoyed as a Protestant nation; the numberless advantages for religious knowledge and religious practice, which we both have enjoyed, and do enjoy, above all the nations on earth—Considering these circumstances, our wickedness is highly aggravated; it is become exceeding sinful; it *overpasses the deeds* * of the most abandoned Heathens. What then can prevent our ruin?

Will you reply, “We fast, and humble ourselves before the Lord?”—I ask, Do we fast from sin? are our fast-days the beginning of a gospel-reformation? When we abstain from our daily bread, do we turn by faith to Jesus Christ; that, *eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, we may live through him* †? live in holiness here, and live in glory hereafter, by applying his immaculate-righteousness to our souls.—If this is the case, we may entertain reviving hopes.—The scripture speaks good words, and comfortable words, to such people; be their condition ever so vile, or their guilt ever so great.—But, alas! are we not just the same persons, the day after our fast, as we

and events. If selfishness, avarice, and venality; if indolence, luxury, and prodigality; if youth without principles, tradesmen without honesty, and nobles without honour; if these are allowed to be, either provoking immoralities, or fatal symptoms; I fear the ruin of England cannot be far off. God Almighty grant, we ministers may not accelerate the fall of our country, by neglecting to warn every man, and exhort every man, to the great evangelical duty of BELIEVING; in order to promote national reformation, and to escape national destruction.

* Jer. v. 28.

† John vi. 57.

were before ? as vain in our conversation, and as forgetful of God ? as fond of folly, and as negligent of divine grace ? as mad upon our idols, of carnal gratification, and worldly gain ?—If so, our fasts are not an acceptable, no, nor a reasonable service ; but a mere mockery of the omniscient Majesty. May he not justly use that upbraiding expostulation ? *Will ye steal, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and walk after other gods, serving, not the Lord JEHOVAH, but divers lusts and pleasures ; and then, with hypocritical devotion, stand before me in this house, which is called by my name * ?*

Perhaps you are ready to alledge, “ Our alms will deliver us. The son of Sirach exhorts us, to *shut up alms in our store-houses* ; and assures us, that *they shall fight for us against our enemies, better than a mighty shield and strong spear †*. And when was there a greater flow of “ beneficence observable in our own, or in any land ? “ What sums have been given to the poor during this severe season of cold and scarcity ! what hospitals of various sorts, and other charitable foundations, have been “ set on foot, and are supported through the kingdom ! ” —Let us beware, brethren, lest those very things, which we look upon as our recommendation, should prove an offence. If our alms proceed not from faith in Jesus Christ, and an unfeigned zeal for the glory of God ; if they are not accompanied with a spirit of love to his name, and with a course of obedience to his commands ; hear what the Lord himself says concerning *such* works ; see what a figure they make in his sight ; and then judge, whether they are likely to be a security to our land. *I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat offerings, I will not accept them ; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs ; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. Hymns of praise, you see, are no other than a noise in the Lord’s ear ; the most costly services of religion are no better than a smoke in his nostrils ; unless judgment, and the love of God, run down as a river ; unless*

* *er. vii. 9. 10.* † *Ecclus. xxix. 12. 13.*

righteousness, and the faith of Christ, abound *as a mighty stream* *.

Do you still conceit yourselves, that, because there are many righteous persons remaining, *they* will stand in the gap; *they* will turn away the anger of the Lord, and be as the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen of Israel, to our endangered state?—Hear what a charge the supreme JEHOVAH gave to his prophet, when the provocations of Israel were risen to a very high pitch: *Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee* †. Amazing and awful prohibition! Yet it is repeated again and again ‡.—God's professing people may, by their excessive wickedness, become so insufferably loathsome, that were the greatest saints to make supplication in their behalf, they should not prevail. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, men mighty in prayer, and zealous for the welfare of their neighbours; though these three men (who had each, by his single intercession, procured blessings from heaven) were uniting their petitions in the midst of this profligate generation; *As I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate* ||.

The land shall be desolate—Doleful sound! dismal decree! And has it not long ago been carried into execution? was not Jerusalem plowed as a field, and trodden down by the Gentiles? are not the inhabitants rooted out of their dwellings, and scattered to all the ends of the earth? while their country is given up for a prey and for a possession to strangers, to infidels, to Turks.

Perhaps you will say, “The Jews crucified the Lord of glory, and rejected his gospel: *therefore* wrath came upon them to the uttermost.”—And are *we* innocent in this respect? are not *we* verily, are not *we* greatly guilty concerning this thing? Is Christ received into the hearts of men, with deep adoration of his person, as Immanuel, God with us? do they glory and delight themselves in his com-

* Amos v. 21. 22. 23. 24. † Jer. vii. 16.

xi. 14.—xiv. 11. || Ezek. xiv. 16.

‡ Jer.
plete

plete redemption, as finished by the great God and our Saviour? do they confide in him alone for their justification, as an infinite surety, and as JEHOVAH our righteousness? do they depend on him alone for their sanctification, as Jesus who saves his people from their sins, and sanctifies them through his blood? do they count all things but dung, for the excellency of Christ, and his incomprehensible merit?—Alas! is not his gospel, though the light of the world, disregarded and despised? is not his name, though a name above every name, derided and blasphemed? are not the influences of his eternal Spirit, though the very life of our souls, exploded and ridiculed? They who would exalt the Saviour, would make every sheaf bow down to the Redeemer's, representing him as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, in the salvation of sinners; those preachers, those writers, those believers, are treated as *the foolish people that dwell in Sichem* *.

What the Jews did through ignorance, we, who call ourselves Christians, Englishmen, Protestants; we do knowingly, wilfully, and of malicious wickedness. And if we thus trample upon the blood which alone can screen us; if we thus crucify afresh that Jesus who is our only hope; what can we look for but vengeance and fiery indignation? If we ourselves, with our own hands, demolish the only barrier, what can ensue, but an inundation of wrath, tribulation and anguish?

Consider these things, brethren. The Lord enable you to discern the signs of the times! Then you will acknowledge, that we have reason to be alarmed, to tremble, to be horribly afraid.—Are not these iniquities the Achans, that will assuredly bring distress and trouble, if not destruction, upon our country? are not these iniquities the Jonahs, that will awaken the divine displeasure, and deliver up our vessel to the tempest, if not to shipwreck?

Is any one disposed to say within himself, "Though others may be guilty of these flagrant iniquities, yet am I not I?"—Remember, my friend, the prophet Isaiah. He was, at least, as free from these flagrant iniquities as your-

* Ecclus. i. 26.

self. Yet he laments, and with painful apprehensions, the guilt of his countrymen, as well as his own *.—Remember king Josiah. Though a holy man and a just, he rent his clothes, and trembled at God's word, denouncing vengeance against an irreligious people †.

Consider also, whether you have not been an accessory, even where you was not the principal. Though you have not joined with the more profligate sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful; yet have you not connived at their impiety? Do their affronts offered to the King of heaven rouse you into a becoming zeal to vindicate his injured honour? or, *because iniquity has abounded*, is not your love, and *the love of many, waxed cold* ‡? Have not the disciples, even the disciples of Jesus, been cowards and traitors; while others have been professed enemies and rebels?

Besides, have not you, have not I, have not all contributed, in many, many instances, to swell the score of national provocations? Is not every sin a disobedience of God's most holy command? is not every sin a defiance of his uncontroulable authority? is not every sin an imitation of the devil? does it not create a kind of hell in the heart? must it not therefore be inconceivably odious to the *holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth*?—If so, how guilty are the very best among us? Is not *this accursed thing* || found in all our tents? has not every one added to the load, that dreadful load, which is likely to sink the nation in ruin? Should not every one, therefore, smite upon his breast, and say with the penitent, *What have I done!* and cry with the publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner!*

Will you still flatter yourself? “All these judgments may be delayed: they may not come in my time.”—I answer, If there be any truth in God's word; if any conjecture is to be made from the appearance of things; these judgments are near: they are at the door. They are like the ax in the executioner's hand, which has been poised, has received its last elevation, and is now falling on the criminal's neck.—Yet, if these should be withheld for a season,

* Is. vi. 5. † 2 Kings xxii. 12. 13. ‡ Matth. xxiv.
12. || Josh. vi. 18.

will not sickness come upon you? are not many disasters lying in ambush to seize you? is not death sharpening his arrow; perhaps fitting it to the string; or even aiming at your life? is not the day, the dreadful day approaching, when the shout of the archangel and the trump of God will be heard; when the dead shall arise, and heaven and earth flee away? will not the Lord, the Lord God omnipotent quickly come, *with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him* *.

Take then, my dear hearers, take the advice of the greatest of preachers, and the wisest of men; *The prudent foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself* †.—Behold! the rains are descending, and the flood is coming; hasten like Noah, hasten to your ark. See! the skies are kindling all around, and the shafts of vengeance are ready to fly. Make haste, Oh! make haste, and delay not the time, to get into a hiding-place.—Let me found in your ears the angel's admonition; and may the Lord of angels, may the friend of sinners, convey it to your hearts! *Escape for your lives, lest ye be consumed*: lest the judgments of God, and the wrath of God, more to be feared than a deluge of waters, more to be feared than a torrent of flames, surround you suddenly—seize you unavoidably—and overwhelm you in ruin, temporal and eternal.

O that I might prevail! O that God would make you sensible of your peril! O that man, woman, and child would ask, “How shall I fly from the wrath to come? where shall I be safe in the day of visitation? Shew me the ark! “Shew me the refuge!”—I should then, with great satisfaction, proceed to answer this inquiry; and point out Christ to your souls, as the *only* hiding place, as the *sure* hiding-place, where you may certainly find safety. But this must be the business, the pleasing business of my next discourse.

Let me beseech you, in the mean time, to lay these a-

* Jude 14. 15.

† Prov. xxii. 3.

larming truths to heart: let them impress your consciences! let them penetrate your souls! And O thou gracious, thou almighty Lord God, do thou command them to sink deep into all our minds: that we may, with Ezra thy priest, sit down *ashamed and astonished* *, under a sense of our manifold iniquities—that we may, with thy servant Job, *abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes* †—that we may, in the words, and with the compunction of thy prophet, every one cry out, *Wo is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips* ‡.

* Ezra ix. 3.

† Job xlii. 6.

‡ Is. vi. 5.

S E R.

S E R M O N IV.

T H E

M E A N S O F S A F E T Y.

HEB. xi. 28.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch them.

WE have been considering the danger of our nation, occasioned—by the *sin* of its inhabitants—by the judgments of God, denounced against such sinners—by the certain execution of his righteous threatenings, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.—When such is the state of a nation, it is high time for the watchmen on her walls to lift up their voice: not indeed to spread vain terrors, but to give notice of the approaching evil; to warn the unwary; to call in the stragglers; and urge every one to retire into a place of safety.

Having, in the preceding discourse, attempted to discharge this office; I shall now, brethren, as in the presence of the all-seeing God, ask—Have we been attentive to these things? are we alarmed with a sense of our guilt and our peril? have we, with the prophet Isaiah, lamented our own, and the sins of our people?—If so, we shall highly prize, we shall ardently desire, the same consolation, and the same relief, which the God of infinitely free goodness vouchsafed to his servant. *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live-coal in his hand, which he had taken from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth**: an action which represents the very thing signified in the text by *the sprinkling of blood*.

The altar typified Christ; who is both the sacrifice that

* Is. vi. 7.

makes

makes the atonement, and the altar that sanctifies the gift. —The *live coal* seems to betoken the word of grace, and the word of life; which brings the glad tidings of the gospel, and testifies of the bleeding Jesus. —*Laying this upon the mouth* very significantly denotes the application of Christ and his great atonement. When this is done under the influence of the Spirit, and by means of faith, then *iniquity is taken away, and sin purged*; taken away from the sight of God, and purged from the sinner's conscience. Guilt is abolished; fear ceases—But this leads us to our second particular,

II. The method of security from danger, effected by *keeping the passover, and sprinkling the blood.*

Moses was apprised of a dreadful vengeance, to be inflicted on Egypt; the most dreadful that ever was known since the beginning of their nation; so dreadful, that it would make every ear tingle, and every heart bleed. The destroying angel was to pass through all the territories of Pharaoh, and smite every first born both of man and beast; so that, before the morning, there should be heaps of slain in the cities, the villages, the fields; not a house exempt, not a family spared, not a herd, nor a flock, free from the fatal calamity.

Moses feared the blow. He feared, as the text intimates the least touch of the divine executioner's sword; knowing that it would crush him and his people, as a moth is crushed by the falling millstone. He is therefore greatly solicitous to provide for their welfare. But what expedient shall he use?—Shall he give them orders to close their windows and bar their doors; to erect fortifications, and stand upon their defence? Alas! before an invisible hand, armed with the vengeance of heaven, all such precautions would have been as a spark before the whirlwind.—Shall he assemble the warriors, or detach parties of soldiers, to patrol the streets, and guard the houses? Vanity of vanities, the sword of the avenging angel would pierce through legions and legions of such guards, as lightning penetrates the yielding air.—Shall the whole congregation bend their

knees

nees, with solemn confession of their sins, and sincere resolutions of future amendment? This, though absolutely necessary to be done, was extremely improper to be relied on. It would have been relying on a broken reed, and despising the ordinance of the holy One.

The Lord himself appoints a method of preservation. Moses is directed to slay a lamb. Each family in Israel is to do the same. Having received the blood into a bason, they are to sprinkle it, not on the threshold, but on the lintel and side-posts of their doors. This shall be a sign to the destroying angel. Looking upon this sign, he will pass over the house; will strike no blow, and execute no vengeance, where-ever he sees the blood sprinkled.—All this, in pursuance of the divine direction, being performed; with faith and tranquillity they wait the event.

You will say, perhaps, What is all this to us? I answer, It is a pattern for our imitation.—Are we then to do the very same thing?—We are to do what their practice typified. The shadow was theirs, the substance is ours. The blood of the lamb typified the blood of Christ, who is the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world.—By the blood of Christ is frequently signified in scripture the *whole* * merit of his life and death, of his actions and sufferings, of his trials and graces: which satisfied God's justice, and magnified God's law; which made propitiation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.—Well does the apostle call it *precious blood*.

* *Being justified by his blood*, Rom. v. 9.; that is, being pardoned, being made righteous, and heirs of all spiritual blessings.—*Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*, Rev. v. 9.; that is, thou hast delivered us from all sin and all wrath; thou hast reconciled us to the Almighty Majesty, and introduced us into his blissful presence.—These blessings ascribed to our Lord's blood, are confessedly the fruit, not barely of his sufferings, but of his whole humiliation, obedience and death. Therefore, in a very valuable dictionary of the most valuable words and phrases, we have this explication of the *blood of the lamb*; "The sacrifice of Christ's death, together with his perfect righteousness and holiness imputed." See Wilson's Christ. Dict.

makes the atonement, and the altar that sanctifies the gift. —The *live coal* seems to betoken the word of grace, and the word of life; which brings the glad tidings of the gospel, and testifies of the bleeding Jesus. —*Laying this upon the mouth* very significantly denotes the application of Christ and his great atonement. When this is done under the influence of the Spirit, and by means of faith, then *iniquity is taken away, and sin purged*; taken away from the sight of God, and purged from the sinner's conscience. Guilt is abolished; fear ceases—But this leads us to our second particular,

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Unspeakably precious are its effects. It appeases the wrath of God revealed from heaven, and makes peace between the offended Creator and the offending creature. Sprinkled on the conscience, it takes away all guilt, and secures from all vengeance.—This, therefore, my brethren, this blood is our security. This is to our souls, what the blood of the paschal lamb was to the Israelitish families. *The name of the Lord*, the grace and goodness of God, manifested in the death and obedience of Christ, *is a strong tower*; not only *the righteous* person, but the distressed creature, and the endangered sinner, *runneth unto it, and is safe* *.

Since this is a point of the utmost importance, it cannot be too clearly displayed, or too strongly established. For this purpose the scripture gives us several most amiable and instructive views of Christ, as our refuge and safety.—He is called a *hiding-place* †. To a hiding-place people retreat; and are secure from their enemies, even from those cruel enemies that seek their destruction. Thus the prophets, whom Obadiah hid by fifty in a cave, were secure from Ahab's tyranny, and Jezebel's persecution. So the soul that flies to Christ, that takes sanctuary under the blood of sprinkling, is secure from the most formidable of all enemies; is secure from all the wrath due to sin, and from every accusation which Satan can bring. To such a person shall be fulfilled what is spoken by the prophet Jeremiah; *When the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, they shall not be found* ‡.

Christ is stiled *a covert from the tempest*. A man, says Isaiah, that is, the God man Christ Jesus, *shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest* ||. When the thunders roar, and the lightnings flash; when the clouds pour down water, and a horrid storm comes on; all that are in the open air retire under the branches of a thick tree, or fly to some other commodious shelter. What storm can be so dreadful as the righteous vengeance of God, poured out upon a sinful nation? what storm can be so dreadful as the eternal vengeance of God, poured out upon a sinful soul? To both these we are exposed; to both

* Prov. xviii. 10. † Is. xxxii. 2. ‡ Jer. l. 20. || Is. xxxii. 2.
these

these we are justly liable. But Christ's blood and righteousness are a covert. Hither we may fly, and be screened; hither we may fly, and be safe: safe as was Noah when he entered the ark; and God's own hand closed the door, and God's own eye guided its motions. For *there is no condemnation of any kind, or from any quarter, to them that are in Christ Jesus* *.

Christ is compared to a *strong-hold*. Turn ye to the *strong-hold*, says the prophet Zechariah †. When soldiers fly from a victorious army, being admitted into an impregnable castle, they are beyond the reach of danger. They give their fears to the wind, and repose themselves in tranquillity. When sinners fly by faith to the dying Jesus, they also, from thenceforth, are in a *tower of salvation* ‡. They may say, each one for himself, "Soul, take thine ease. All thy guilt is laid upon thy Lord, and punished in thy surety. The flaming sword of justice is returned to the sheath, having received full satisfaction from the sufferings of Christ. The curse of a violated law is no more, having been executed to the utmost upon the person of my Redeemer. Nay, its curse is turned into a blessing. For *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us Gentiles* §; even the blessing of perfect reconciliation, and everlasting friendship, with God most high."

This leads me to mention another beautiful comparison, which represents Christ not only as the cause of safety, but as the source of consolation. He shall be *as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land* §.—In a dry place, burnt up for want of moisture, nothing is so desirable, nothing so refreshing as water. To the poor sinful soul, of whose condition the parched ground is a fit resemblance, Christ shall be, not barely as the morning dew, not barely as the transient shower, but as a river: yea, as *rivers of water*, that flow in copious and never-failing streams through the thirsty soil; making even the sandy desert green with herbage, and gay with

* Rom. viii. 1. † Zech. ix. 12. ‡ 2 Sam. xxii. 51.

§ Gal. iii. 13. 14. § Is. xxxii. 2.

flowers.—In a sultry clime, where the sun pours insufferable heat, and all things languish under the glaring rays, nothing is so cheering to the labourer, nothing so welcome to the traveller, as a cool and gloomy *shade*. A poor soul, assaulted by the fiery darts of Satan, and distressed with the remembrance of former iniquities, is this sultry clime, or *weary land*. But Christ and his atonement are not barely as the boughs of an oak, which extend their coolness to a small distance; not barely as the canopy of an alcove, through which much of the glowing influence penetrates; but like the *shadow of a rock*, a *great rock*; which projects the friendly shade over many a league; which has repelled and excluded the sun, through all preceding ages; and gives you, as it were, “the cold of snow amidst the heat of harvest*.”

Here then, brethren, is our security amidst all peril. The blood, the righteousness, the infinitely glorious person of Christ; these are our hiding-place—these are our covert—these are our strong-hold. And (blessed be God!) the doors stand wide open: they are never shut, night nor day. The access is free for any, free for all, free for the greatest sinners. We are not only allowed, but we are invited; nay, we are commanded, to approach; to enter; to enjoy the protection: or, as the words of the text express it, to *sprinkle the blood* on our souls.

Sprinkle the blood on our souls! You will probably say, “What does this signify? What was done by Moses, when he sprinkled the visible blood, we easily apprehend: but how can we sprinkle the blood of Christ, which we never saw? the blood of Christ, whom the heavens have received?”—This is one of those mysteries which the natural man understandeth not: he can form no notion of it: it is foolishness to his apprehension. Therefore, may the eternal Spirit both teach us to understand the doctrine, and enable us to practise the duty!

To sprinkle the blood of Christ is truly to *believe* in Christ, in his infinite atonement and everlasting righteousness: it is to *receive* these blessings as God’s free gift to

* Prov. xxv. 13.

men, to sinners, to ourselves in particular: and, having received, to make continual use of them in every time of trial, for every occasion of need.

Perhaps this doctrine may become clearer if we illustrate it by an example. A remarkable example we have in the practice of David. After the commission of his grievous crimes, he did, in a very eminent manner, sprinkle the blood. For he said unto the Lord, *Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, (the instrument of sprinkling the typical blood) and I shall be clean; thou shalt wash me in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and I shall be whiter than snow* *. This fountain he looked upon as opened for his sins; and fully sufficient to cleanse him from all his filthiness; so that he should be as free from spot, before the righteous Judge, as the snow on Salmon was free from stain.—Had he said within himself, “My crimes are too great for this blood to expiate;” or, “This blood cannot be shed for so vile an offender as I am:” he would then have put the atonement far from him, together with all its expiating virtue. This would have been not to apply, but to throw away the blood; not to sprinkle it upon the soul, but to pour it upon the ground.

Come then, brethren; come, fellow-sinners; let us also, in this day of fear and danger, look unto Christ, as dying, that we may live; as made sin, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him; as made a curse, that we may inherit eternal blessedness.—Let us look unto Jesus as taking our nature, and standing in our stead. Behold him apprehended as a thief; ignominiously bound, and marked with the lashes of the scourge. Behold him crowned with thorns; his hair clotted, his face discoloured, his breast and shoulders all bedewed with his own most innocent blood. Behold him nailed to the cross; hanging in the most racking posture; till all his bones are out of joint; hanging amidst malefactors, forsaken of God, of angels and men. Behold him bowing his head in death, and stabbed to the heart with the executioner’s spear.—Thus behold him, and say, “Verily, this sufferer was the Son of

* Psal. li. 7.

“ God, and the Lord of glory. Verily, these sufferings
 “ were the punishment due to *my* sins. In all this extreme
 “ anguish he bore *my* griefs, and carried *my* sorrows. He
 “ was oppressed, and he was afflicted, because I had done
 “ amiss and dealt wickedly. He was cut off out of the
 “ land of the living, that he might make his soul an
 “ offering for *my* sins, and obtain eternal redemption for
 “ *me*.”

Thus behold the blessed Jesus: thus, sinners, behold the Lord your righteousness; with this look of application, with this appropriating faith. Be verily persuaded, that you shall find mercy before a holy God; not because you have any worthiness, but because Christ has incomparable merit: that you shall never come in condemnation, not because you have fasted and prayed, but because Christ is your great propitiation. Be persuaded, that God has given his Son for you; that God gives his Son to you; and together with him eternal life.—Be persuaded of all this, upon the best of foundations, the infallible word of God; who has declared, that Christ died for the *ungodly* *, and by his obedience *sinners* are made righteous †; that Christ was wounded on the cross, and intercedes in heaven for *transgressors* ‡; that he received spiritual gifts, and divine blessings, even for the *rebellious* §.—The Lord God omnipotent, the author and finisher of faith, enable you thus to believe! on the ground of his own most sure word, thus to believe! Then you keep the Christian passover; then you sprinkle the blood of Christ; then you may boldly say, *Under his shadow we shall be safe*.—Which reminds us of the third particular, namely,

III. The success of this method, denoted by the destroyer not so much as *touching* them. *Left he that destroyed the first born should touch them*—What a beautiful antithesis! The Egyptian first-born were wounded, were mortally wounded, were absolutely *destroyed*: the Israelites were not hurt, nor endangered, no nor so much as *touched*. So sure

* Rom. v. 6.

† Rom. v. 19.

‡ Is. liii. 12.

§ Psal. lxviii. 18.

and complete a defence ~~was~~ this blood of sprinkling!—Nothing else could have yielded *any* protection; this afforded *perfect* security. When this was sprinkled on their doorposts, they had no cause to be *afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day* *.

And is not the hiding place, the covert, the strong-hold, provided for *us* in the blood and righteousness of Christ, an equal security? do they not yield absolute, perfect, consummate safety? Nothing else could administer the least hope to the chiefest apostle; this opens an inviolable sanctuary even for the greatest of sinners. None ever perished who laid their help upon Christ. He *saves*—he *saves to the uttermost*—he saves not a few only, but *all*—*all that come unto God through him* †. Is our danger great? our security is greater. Is our danger exceeding great? our security is incomparably greater. In short, our refuge and security are the greatest that can be wished, that can be imagined, that God himself could provide.—Chearing, charming, ravishing truth! Suffer me to enlarge upon it, brethren. Let your attention hang on the glad tidings. May your hearts imbibe the precious doctrine!

Had *more than forty men bound themselves with an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed* ‡ some one in this congregation; the danger would be great, and the case startling. Nevertheless the endangered person would think himself sufficiently safe, if he could steal away, and hide himself in one of the deepest caves of America, with a vast track of unknown land, and all the waters of the vaster ocean between himself and the ruffians. Much safer will your souls be under the hiding, cleansing, atoning efficacy of this blood of sprinkling; by which unrighteousnesses are forgiven, sins are covered, and iniquities done away, as though they had never been.

Were you overtaken by a violent and impetuous storm? If you sought shelter under a covert that was firmer than boards of cedar, harder than slabs of marble, thicker than

* Psal. xci. 5. 6.

† Heb. vii. 25.

‡ Acts xxiii. 21.
-the

the roofs of all the houses in Europe; you would reckon yourselves secure from torrents of rain, or from volleys of hail. Much more secure will you be from everlasting wrath; secure, even when *the Lord shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest* *; provided you are found under the covert of Christ's magnificent and meritorious righteousness: by virtue of which, *all that believe are justified*—I say not from millions, or from thousands of millions, but—*from all offensive, provoking, criminal things* †.

Should you be pursued by a conquering foe, determined to cut you in pieces? If you turned into a castle whose walls were stronger than brass, stronger than adamant, stronger than all the rocks in the world; you might laugh at the attempts of your enemy: you are guarded from the power and peril of the sword. So, and abundantly more, are you guarded from every spiritual enemy, and from every spiritual evil, when you fly to the strong-hold of Christ's death and atonement. The souls that abide in Christ, *they shall dwell on high*; beyond the rage of the old serpent and the great dragon: *their place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks* ‡; against which all the assaults of earth and hell shall never be able to prevail. They may say, with the triumphant apostle, *How much more shall we, who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, be delivered from ruin, and reign in life by Christ Jesus* ||!

And will you not prize such a strong-hold? shall not such a covert be dear to your guilty souls? will you not set an exceeding great value upon such an hiding-place? especially when the storm is gathering and threatening all around: when days of desolation and perplexity are coming upon the world; and judgments, inflicted by men, may transmit us to the everlasting judgment of God.—How did Israel bless and adore their most merciful JEHOVAH, for granting them such an effectual means of preservation, as the blood of the paschal lamb! and shall not we bless and adore the same most gracious JEHOVAH, for granting us a

* Psal. xi. 6.

† Acts xiii. 39.

‡ Is. xxxiii. 16.

|| Rom. v. 17.

means of preservation altogether as effectual, and incomparably more wonderful?

If you should say, "How does it appear that the blood of Christ is such a security? so great, so wonderful, so matchless!"—Because it is the blood of him who is *JEHOVAH's fellow* *; of him who is *God over all, blessed for ever* †; of him in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily* ‡.—Permit me, brethren, to clear up and establish this doctrine; as it is a doctrine of the last importance; on which the very strength of our salvation is built; and from which the fulness of our consolation flows.

There are in Christ, in his one undivided person, two distinct natures. One nature is eternal, infinite, almighty; which is called by the apostle, *the form of God* ||. The other nature had a beginning; is limited as to extent, and limited as to power. This is termed by the apostle, *the seed of Abraham* §.—As God, he is subject to no authority, and infinitely superior to all possibility of suffering. To become capable of obeying, suffering and dying, he humbled himself: and was found in fashion as a man: that by obeying, suffering and dying in human flesh, he might triumph over sin and Satan, in that very nature which Satan had overcome, and sin had ruined: that, by accomplishing all this in the room and stead of his people, he might bring many sons unto glory: not without a full satisfaction to the rights of injured justice, and to the demands of a violated law.

Jesus Christ then, in his divine nature, is the Most High God. The heaven of heavens is the august palace, and royal residence, of this blessed and only Potentate. Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. The church militant rely on him; the church triumphant adore him; while all the hosts of angels pay homage to him.—Jesus Christ, in his divine nature, is the majestic and most adorable I AM; self-existent and independent. All worlds and all beings are derived wholly from him, and depend continually upon him:

* Zech. xiii. 7.

† Rom. ix. 5.

‡ Col. ii. 9.

|| Phil. ii. 6.

§ Heb. ii. 16.

he made the worlds, and upholdeth all things *.—View the beauty, the magnificence, the harmony, observable in heaven, on earth, through the universe. All is intended, like the miracle wrought at Cana of Galilee, to manifest his glory †: to tell every one who has eyes to see, and a heart to understand, how great our Saviour is; how sublime his majesty, and how marvellous his perfection. All things, says the Spirit of inspiration, were created by him, and for him ‡.—Judge then, whether the obedience and atonement of such a Redeemer are not sufficient to secure, perfectly to secure any sinner, every sinner, all sinners, that fly by faith under his wings. As perfectly sufficient they are for this blessed purpose, as the unmeasurable circuit of the skies is roomy enough for a lark to fly in, or as the immense orb of the sun is beamy enough for a labourer to work by.

Behold now the dignity and excellency of this blood, which is your covert, your hiding-place, your strong-hold. It has all the power and efficacy that every divine perfection can give it. It is the blood and righteousness of him who is eternal, incomprehensible, and exalted above all blessing and praise. Surely then nothing can bear any proportion to it. Guilt, all guilt, though ever so execrable and horrid, compared with the grandeur and riches of this invaluable blood ||, is as a glow-worm before the sun. All manner

* Heb. i. 2. 3. † John ii. 11. ‡ Col. i. 16.

|| St Chrysostom's explanation of a verse lately quoted, is so important in itself, and so apposite to our purpose, exhibits such a magnificent and delightful display of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, that I promise myself, the reader will allow me to present him with a translation. *How much more shall they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one Christ Jesus!* ΟΥΚ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΕΥΤΑΥΘΑ ΧΑΡΙΝ, &c. "The apostle says not, grace, but abundance of grace. For we receive, not barely what may suffice to obtain our pardon, but incomparably more. We are delivered from all punishment, and from every evil. We are justified, we are sanctified, made the children of God, and the brethren of his only begotten Son. We are constituted heirs,

manner of sins and blasphemies are blotted out by such an expiation, as the shades of night are abolished by the light of day. Every sinner washed in this blood must be whiter

“ heirs, joint-heirs with the Prince of heaven. Yea, we become the members of his body; most intimately and indissolubly united to that divine head.

“ All these privileges St Paul styles *the abundance of grace*: intimating, that the antidote is not only qualified to counteract and expel the poison, but is sovereign also to establish health, to create beauty, to impart honour, and, from the most malignant of all evils, to produce the most distinguished blessings: any one of which, separately considered, would have been sufficient to overcome and disarm death; but under their *combined* influence, it is absolutely destroyed, it vanishes entirely away, and leaves not so much as a trace of mischief, or a shadow of terror.

“ Let us suppose some poor debtor owing a considerable sum, and, for want of payment, cast into prison. A generous friend, pitying his condition, discharges the whole debt, and releases him from confinement: and not this only, but bestows upon him splendid apparel, with thousands of silver and gold; introduces him to court, and recommends him to the royal favour; procures his advancement to the highest honours, and puts him in possession of the grandest preferments. Where now is the disgrace of his imprisonment? and where are the distresses of his insolvent state?

“ Such is the case with regard to us sinners, and our most gracious Redeemer. He has paid inconceivably more than we either did or could possibly owe. Being God, the true God, the infinite and eternal God, his payment exceeds our debt, as much as the waters of the great deep exceed the small drop of a bucket.—Doubt not, therefore, poor sinner, that thou findest for refuge to this all-glorious Saviour; doubt not but thy sins, though more virulent than all plagues, are done away; and death, though he be the king of terrors, is abolished: this abolished, and those done away, before *such* grace and merit; even as a spark of fire is extinguished, when plunged into the abysses of the sea.”—For, indeed, compared with a *divine* person, and an *infinite* righteousness, whatever guilt you have contracted, whatever thing you can name, is as our devout orator speaks, *ὅτις μικρὸν πρὸς πλάγος ὕπαιρου*, *no more than a scanty drop compared with the boundless ocean.* Vid. Chrysost. in loc.

than the unspotted wool, whiter than the virgin snows. Every sinner clothed in this righteousness, must be unblameable and unreproucheable, even before the eye of Omniscience itself.

For this, therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my brethren; and let every thing that hath a being praise his unutterable grace. For *behold! God is our salvation.* God himself is made flesh, and become our sacrifice, our sin-offering, our justifying righteousness: *therefore will we trust, and not be afraid* *; trust in this infinitely sufficient Saviour; and not be afraid of death or hell, of any enemy or any evil.—But this leads me to apply the whole: which I shall do by way of

Examination,

Direction,

Exhortation,

Consolation.

I. By way of *examination*. *Examine your own selves*, says the apostle †. Have you kept the passover? have you sprinkled the blood?—Many, perhaps, will be ready to answer, “We have.”—But beware, my friends, lest ye deceive your own souls. Let me give you a touchstone, whereby you may try your spirit, and pronounce aright concerning your state.

Have you been convinced of your *great sinfulness*? of your sinful nature and your sinful practice? Have you been made sensible, that hell, the deepest hell, is your deserved portion? is what you deserve for any transgression—for every transgression—how much more for the many thousands—how much more for the many millions—how much more for the numberless multitude of your provocations? If you have never been convinced of these most alarming, but certain truths; if you have never been touched with a sense of your extreme guilt, and undone state; I fear, you are settled upon your lees, you are in the dead sleep of sin. You are not so much as awakened; much less have you applied Christ.

Again; have you been made to see, that *nothing but Christ*

* If. xii. 2. † 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

and his precious blood, nothing but Christ and his divine righteousness, can be your security from vengeance? have you been convinced, that thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, could never expiate the least of your iniquities? that no tears, no confessions, no amendment, nothing but the sacrifice of the body of Christ, can make your peace with God? If you have not been taught the absolute insufficiency of every remedy, save only the meritorious sufferings of Jesus Christ; you have not seen him, neither known him; much less is his blood sprinkled upon your conscience.

Once more; have you a supreme, a *matchless esteem* for Christ? is Christ and his great salvation the thing that you long for? is he to your souls the pearl of great price? do you account all things but loss, that you may win Christ, and be found in him? If this is not the state of your soul, I dare not flatter you with vain hopes: I must not buoy you up with ungrounded imaginations. You are not, as yet, in your hiding-place; neither have you fled to your strong-hold. All the curses of the divine law stand charged and pointed full against you. You have no security from being hurt by the first death, nor from being irrecoverably ruined by the second death. If judgments should come upon a sinful and backsliding people, you have no defence; there is no wall of fire around you. You must therefore expect to fall among those that fall: and, falling by the sword, may immediately drop into hell.

Can you hear this, and be unconcerned? can you listen to this warning, more awful than the voice of ten thousand thunders, and not start from your insensibility? are you not looking around, and ready to cry out, "What then shall I do to be safe in the day of evil?"—O! that this enquiry came from the very bottom of your hearts. I should then proceed, with great cheerfulness, to

2. A word of *direction*.—Fly to Christ, alarmed sinners. Come under the covert of his blood. Appropriate the blessed Jesus: look upon him and his merit as your own. Thus sprinkle his blood: sprinkle it upon your lintel and doorposts; upon all you are, upon all you have, and all you do: upon your consciences, that they may be purged; upon
your

your souls, that they may be sanctified; upon your works, that they may be accepted.—Say, every one for himself, I
 “ am a poor, guilty, helpless creature: but in Jesus Christ,
 “ who is full of grace and truth, *I have righteousness and*
 “ *strength* *.—I am a poor, polluted, loathsome creature: but
 “ Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and the
 “ brightness of his Father’s glory, *has loved me, and wash-*
 “ *ed me from my filthiness in his own blood* †.—I am by na-
 “ ture a perverse depraved creature; and, by evil practice,
 “ a lost damnable sinner: but Jesus Christ, who made the
 “ worlds; Jesus Christ, whom heaven and earth adore; e-
 “ ven Jesus Christ himself, came from the mansions of bliss,
 “ on purpose *to seek me, to save me* ‡; to give himself for
 “ me.—And how can I perish, who have such a ransom?
 “ how can I be undone, who have such a repairer of my
 “ breaches? how can I come into condemnation, who have
 “ the blood, not of ten thousand sacrifices; the merit, not
 “ of ten thousand angels; but the blood and merit of Je-
 “ HOVAH himself, for my propitiation.”

Should you say, “ Have I a warrant for such a trust?”—
 You have the best of warrants, our Lord’s express *permission*:
Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely ||. It is
 not said, this or that person only, but *whosoever*; inclu-
 ding you and me; excluding no individual man or woman.
 —It is not said, *whosoever is worthy*, but *whosoever*
is willing. *Wilt thou be made whole?* was our Lord’s question
 to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. *Wilt thou*,
 all terms and conditions apart, inherit grace and glory? is
 his most benevolent address to sinful men, in all ages.—*Let*
him take the water of life; let him receive me and my righ-
 teousness; let him look upon all that I have done and suf-
 fered, as done and suffered for *his* redemption. This will
 administer peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost:
 this will produce love of God, and alacrity of obedience;
 in which things the true *life* of the soul consists.—All these
 blessings are to be received *freely*, without money and with-
 out price: that is, without any good works, any good quali-

* If. xlv. 24. † Rev. i. 5. ‡ Matth. xviii. 11. || Rev.
 xxii. 17:

ties, or any preparatory requisites whatever : to be received, as the infinitely rich gift of divine grace, vouchsafed even to the *lost*—the *guilty*—the *undone*.

You have our Lord's most generous *invitation* ; *Come unto me*. And whom does he call ? The righteous ? No. The excellent ? Quite the reverse. He calls sinners ; miserable sinners ; even the most miserable of sinners : those who are *weary and heavy laden* ; overwhelmed with iniquities ; bowed down to the very brink of hell, and ready to think, " There is no hope for them." Yet them he encourages ; them he invites ; to them he declares, *I will give you rest* * ; rest in the enjoyment of peace with God, and peace in your own consciences.—Observe and admire the riches of your Redeemer's grace. He says not, Ye are vile wretches ; polluted by sin, and enslaved to the devil ; therefore keep at a distance ; but, *therefore come*. Come, and be cleansed by my blood ; come, and be made free by my Spirit.—He says not, Furnish yourselves with this, or that, or the other recommending accomplishment ; but only come : come just as you are ; poor, undone, guilty creatures. Yea, come to me for pardon and recovery ; to me, who have given my life, myself, my all, for your ransom.

Should you still question, whether these inestimable blessings are free for you ? Remember, brethren, they are free for *sinners*. Is this your character ? Then they are as free for your acceptance, as for any person's in the world. *To us eternal life is given* † ; not us who had deserved it by our goodness, but us who had forfeited it by our sins.—*To you is preached the forgiveness of sins* ‡ ; not you whose transgressions were inconsiderable, but you whose iniquities were more in number than the hairs of your head—Even to you, who are the lost and perishing sinners of Adam's family, *is the word of this salvation sent* §. And, by a commission from God, we publish it ; that, as sinners, you may receive it ; that receiving it, you may commence believers ; and *believing, may have life through his name* §.

Some, perhaps, will be inclined to debate ; " Is this so

* Matth. xi. 28. † 1 John v. 11. ‡ Acts xiii. 38. § Acts xiii. 26. § John xx. 31.

" extraordinary

“ extraordinary a matter ? will this exercise of *believing* “ do such great things for us, or put us in possession of “ such singular blessings ? ”—Moses might have formed the same scruple with regard to the *sprinkling of blood*. Will this seemingly insignificant circumstance be such an extraordinary safeguard to us ? will this preserve us from the impending blow, more effectually than the labours of the engineer, or the shield and spear of the warrior ?—But Moses consulted not with flesh and blood ; Moses rejected all such carnal reasonings. *By faith* he and his people kept the passover, and were made partakers of the temporal salvation. *By faith* may you and I receive Christ ! so shall we be partakers of pardon and eternal salvation.

By believing the promise of God, and by trusting in the person of Christ, we are united to the Lord Jesus * ; so as to have a real interest in his blood and righteousness. Being united to Christ, our sins are done away, by virtue of his infinitely precious atonement ; and eternal life becomes ours, on account of his everlasting righteousness—Whoever thus believes, believes merely as a sinner, not upon the supposition of any goodness in himself, but upon the sole warrant of God’s promise, in the infallible word of the gospel. Such a person shall not be ashamed of his belief ; shall never be disappointed of his hope ; *according to his faith shall it be unto him* †.

Come then, fellow sinners ; believe the record of Heaven. Set to your seal, that God is true. Honour his word, which cannot lie ; honour his grace, which is absolutely free ; honour his dear Son, who has obtained eternal redemption for such unworthy creatures as you and I. What shall hinder you ?—But this leads me to,

3. A word of *exhortation*. I say then, what shall hinder you ? what shall withhold you, a single moment, from believing ? *since all things are ready* ‡ in Christ Jesus. The great propitiation is made by him ; the perfect obedience is performed by him ; all the conditions of the new covenant are fulfilled by him. Come then, and partake of the heavenly blessings ; as you partake of a marriage-feast,

* Eph. iii. 17.

† Matth. ix. 29.

‡ Matth. xxii. 4.
when

when the entertainment is all prepared, and the bridegroom bids you welcome.

Fain would I prevail in this most important address. Lord, make bare thy arm; incline their hearts; *make them willing in the day of thy power* *.—My dear friends, if you turn away from such invitations, you are ruined to eternity: misery awaits you here, and damnation hereafter. Suffer me then to be importunate. Refuse not him that calleth you by my mouth; that bids you trust, and not be afraid; that offereth himself, with all his fulness, to you.—Why are you backward? why slow of heart to believe? why do you stand at a distance from the all-gracious Jesus?

Is it because you are guilty wretches? Then he publishes the act of indemnity to you: *I, even I, am he that blotteth out your transgressions, for mine own sake* †.—Is it because you are polluted creatures; lothsome in your own eyes, and much more lothsome in the eye of infinite purity? Then hear the word of the holy One: *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you* ‡.—Is it because your sins are more numerous, and more heinous than the sins of others? Be they ever so numerous, or ever so aggravated, thus saith the God of immensely rich grace in Christ; *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool* §.

Are you still objecting, "I am weak; I have no strength; I cannot believe?"—Look then to a promising God; that he may help your unbelief; that he may fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. For he who is truth itself hath said, *Your God will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing* §.—Has the Lord given you a desire to believe in his dear Son? doubt not but he will also give you the power. Does

* Psal. cx. 3.

† Is. xliii. 25.

‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

§ Is. i. 18.

§ Is. xxxv. 4. 5. 6.

God the Lord bring to the birth, and not give strength to bring forth? that be far from him! the suspicion be far from us! He has, in unspeakable mercy, appointed his blessed Spirit for this purpose. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, attendeth continually on this very thing; to testify of Christ, and to reveal Christ in our sinful souls; enabling us to discern the all-sufficiency of Christ, to discern our right to make use of Christ, and to receive Christ as our own—our own God and Saviour.

Be it then your daily endeavour, your continual business, to believe; firmly, confidently, assuredly to believe in Jesus Christ; as the great and glorious Redeemer, in whom you have pardon, you have righteousness and eternal life. Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, and God will help you; God will strengthen you; yea, God will uphold you with the right hand of his righteousness.—Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, depending on the divine faithfulness, proceeding upon the divine warrant, in obedience to the divine command, which expressly says, *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper* *: *believe in his dear Son, so shall ye be saved* †.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, *Now thou art commanded, this do* ‡. Let me also say to my hearers, Now ye are allowed, invited, commanded to believe in the Son of God, this do. It is your grand concern; the one thing needful. Without this nothing will profit you. Therefore I repeat my exhortation: therefore I am so urgent: therefore I cannot dismiss the subject, without beseeching the Father of mercies to command a blessing upon the word; that you may indeed *believe* || *unto righteousness*, unto life, unto salvation. Thus will you glorify the ineffable goodness of God, and the inestimable merit of Christ: thus will you find a sure, a full, an incomparably rich provision made for your safety: and thus will you most effectually comply with that tender and gracious invitation of the Lord your God; *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until*

* 2 Chron. xx. 20.

† Acts xvi. 31.

‡ Gen. xlv. 19.

|| Rom. x. 10.

the indignation be overpast. For behold! the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity*.

And what will ye do, when the Lord cometh forth to punish, if you are not received into the hiding-place?—What will ye do, ye men of sober and decent conversation; who have nothing but an outward regularity, and some customary conformity to religious worship? These, though in their place valuable, yet are no security. They are only the outworks, not your fortification, nor your citadel. When the righteous Judge shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel†; these, without the blood of sprinkling, will be but as a withered leaf amidst the inextinguishable burning.

What will ye do, ye men of wealth and large possessions? Will riches profit you in the day of wrath‡? will riches protect you in the day of the Lord's controversy? Alas! they will mark you out for a prey, and serve only to lure the vultures. If riches have been your idol; hoarded up in your coffers, or lavished out upon yourselves; they will, when the day of reckoning comes, be like the garment of pitch and brimstone, put upon the criminal condemned to the flames.

What will ye do, ye mighty men of valour? If the Lord turn his hand upon you, your hearts shall fail, and your knees be feeble; your arm shall lose its strength, and your sword shall lose its edge. Your fleets and armies shall be as tow, and the commanders of them as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them||.—If you are not sheltered and secured by this blood, what will ye do, when the shout of the archangel is made, and the trumpet of God is heard? Undaunted as you now seem, you will then, in an agony of despair, call upon rocks to fall upon you, and mountains to cover you§.

What will ye do, ye voluptuous men, and ye careless women? ye that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall? ye that drink wine in bowls,

* Is. xxvi. 20. 21. † 2 Thess. i. 7. 8. ‡ Prov. xi. 4. || Is. i. 31. § Rev. vi. 16.

and anoint yourselves with the chief ointments? Ah! what will ye do, when *the whole land*, for the universal degeneracy of its inhabitants, for their contempt of Christ, and neglect of grace, *shall become brimstone, and salt, and burning; insomuch that it shall not be sown, nor bear, nor any grass grow thereon* *? Much more may I ask. What will ye do, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the whole earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up?

What will ye do, people of *all* ranks and conditions, when *mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour* †? when your houses shall be laid in heaps, and your streets be made a place of graves? when your cities, that were full of inhabitants, shall be solitary; and not a voice heard amidst them, but sighs of the disconsolate, and groans of the dying? when your children shall be slaughtered in one place; your parents in another; and the “slain” shall lie behind the slayer, as the sheaves ‡ behind the “reaper, in the time of harvest?”—But, above all, what will ye do, when the great white throne is erected; when the earth and the heavens flee away from the face of him that sitteth thereon; and the dead, both small and great, stand before God to be judged? Without the blood of sprinkling, where can you be safe? how will you appear? what will you do?—Whereas, if Christ and his blood are yours, all is yours. You have nothing to fear, in time or eternity: “O! well is it with you, and happy shall you be.” But this reminds me of adding a word,

4. By way of *consolation*.—Possibly you may be ready to enquire, “What consolation will this administer, amidst the presages, or under the approach, of national calamities?”—Very great. *Fear not*, says the Lord, *for I have redeemed thee* ||. Redemption by Christ is a preservative from all terror, and an antidote against every evil. This causes the serene breast, and the lightsome heart. Hence comes calmness of conscience, *quietness and assurance*

* Deut. xxix. 23.
|| Is. xliii. 1.

† Ezek. vii. 26.

‡ Jer. ix. 22.

for ever. Therefore says the prophet, *This man shall be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land.* The blood and righteousness of our incarnate God shall be the sovereign support of our souls, even when the enemy invades our territories, and preys upon the vitals of our country: yea, when he *treads upon our palaces* *; not only demolishes our dwelling-houses, but lays our royal edifices in the dust, and makes us feel all the grievousness of war.

Further; when this blood is sprinkled, sin is done away, and God is appeased. His promises are your portion, and his arm is your defence. For the comfort of such people it is written; *He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine, he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction, when it cometh* †. In the hands of this reconciled and faithful Creator, this unwearied and almighty Deliverer, how safely may you deposit yourselves and your families, your possessions and your all!

Be not then discouraged, ye followers of Christ, though troublous times should come. All creatures, and all events, are under the controul of your heavenly Father. If he has any further occasion for your service, or sees it conducive to your good, he will preserve you amidst the greatest dangers. He can draw a curtain of concealment over you, as he did over David in the cave ‡. He can plant an invisible guard around you, as he did around Elisha in Dothan §. He can turn the hearts of your adversaries, and make even the enemy and the avenger to be at peace with you; as he did in the case of Jacob and his enraged brother Esau.—Or, if you fall in the common calamity, *your latter end shall be peace*; your inheritance is unalienable, and *your joy no man taketh from you*. Your best things, your eternal interests, are secure, inviolably secure, being *hid with Christ in God* §.

Happy, unspeakably blessed and happy the people, on whom this blood is sprinkled! If vindictive visitations

* Mic. v. 5. † Job v. 19. 20. 21. ‡ 1 Sam. xxiv. 3.
§ 2 Kings vi. 17. § Col. iii. 3.

come upon the land, this may screen and protect their persons; like the mark, which the man clothed with linen set on the forehead of God's chosen ones *; or like the line of scarlet thread, which Rahab the harlot bound to the window of her house †. However, by this blood of reconciliation, all afflictions shall be disarmed, and every evil unstung. Nay, *all things*, not in prosperity only, but in adversity likewise, *shall work together for good* ‡. Death, even death, is vanquished for them, and become their gain. And the last judgment is no longer the object of their dread, but their unspeakable privilege. Being justified by this blood, they may even *glory in tribulation, and rejoice in hope*, in sure and steadfast hope of the glory of God ||.

Will ye not then, brethren, ardently join with me? while I lift my voice to God in the heavens, and say,
 “Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord; let this be a day
 “of thy power, and a day of our redemption. Behold,
 “O God our Saviour, and look upon thy various congregations. See what a gathering of the people there is in
 “thy courts; let there be as great a gathering of souls to
 “thy blessed self. Fulfil the prophecy, almighty Shiloh!
 “Let sinners, won by the discovery of thy grace, fly unto
 “thee as a cloud; and take shelter in thy wounds, as the
 “doves in their windows! that they may rest in the day of
 “trouble; and, when time shall be no more, may enter
 “into that everlasting rest, which remaineth for the people
 “of God.” *Amen!*

* Ezek. ix. 6. † Josh. ii. 18. 19.

‡ Rom. viii. 28. This seems to be the meaning of the Holy Ghost, in the passage lately quoted from Job. *In six*, in manifold and various troubles God shall deliver thee. Or, if he suffer thee to be involved in seven, there shall no evil, no penal evil, touch thee. His gracious presence shall be more than deliverance. Thou shalt not feel *anguish*, but enjoy *comfort*: thou shalt not suffer *harm*, but receive *benefit*. Though the flames of tribulation kindle all around, they shall not consume thee; but (like the fire which surrounded the three Hebrew confessors) shall only loose thy bonds, and set thee free; set thy affections free from a troublesome world, or set thy soul free from a prison of clay. || Rom. v. 1. 2. 3.

S E R.

S E R M O N V.

T H E

W A Y O F H O L I N E S S.

E Z E K. xviii. 27.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

MAny of my hearers, I observe, are husbandmen; and the season, if I mistake not, is the season of *seed-time*. I will suppose a person, unskilled in your business, brethren, taking notice of your work. Perhaps he goes home, and says—"What strange inconsiderate creatures have I seen in the field! I saw them, instead of laying up their corn in the garner, throwing it away by handfuls. Nay, they even buried it in the ground, and left it to putrefy under the clods. Is this the way to improve their stock, and increase their substance? is this the way to get gain, and provide for their families?"

Should any one make such a reflection on your conduct, you have an answer ready. The same answer, only with an alteration of circumstances, will be equally proper for your preacher. It is true, his usual subjects are, the absolutely free grace of God, and the immensely rich merits of Christ; the infinite atonement, and everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer. But because he generally enlarges upon these doctrines, is he therefore throwing away his words? does he *neglect* the cause, or *disregard* the interests of *holiness*? Far from it. He is sowing the seed of vital holiness; without which seed, holiness will never flourish in your hearts, will never bring forth fruit in your lives; any more than your plowed lands would produce a crop of corn, without receiving the appointed grain. It is through the knowledge of our adorable Saviour, as calling us

to glory and virtue, that we have all things pertaining unto life and godliness * ; unto the enjoyment of life eternal, and the practice of true godliness.

To convince you that this is my aim, I have chosen a text full to the purpose ; and not unsuitable to the occasion of our present assembly. *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.*

The words naturally divide themselves into the following particulars.

I. What the wicked man should turn from—*wickedness.*

II. What he should turn to—to do that which is lawful and right.

III. What will be the effect of such turning—he shall save his soul alive.

May Christ Jesus, the head of his church, and the wonderful Counsellor, enable us to open these truths ; to add a word of lively application ; and to receive godly edifying from the whole !

I. What the wicked man should turn from—*wickedness.* Here perhaps you expect that I should mention several sorts of wickedness ; should display the detestable nature, and destructive consequences of each ; and deter you, by such considerations, from the commission of them all ; deter you from lying and defrauding, from cursing and swearing, from drunkenness and uncleanness, from a spiteful temper and a backbiting tongue. These are horrid evils. On account of these the land mourns. These bring the vengeance of God on a person, and on a people †. If I could speak in thunder, I could never inveigh too loudly against these vices. “ Ye that go on in such iniquities, ye are scattering brimstone upon your habitations ‡ ; ye are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath ||. How can ye escape the damnation of hell ** ? ”

* 2 Pet. i. 3.

† Col. iii. 6.

‡ Job xviii. 15.

|| Rom. ii. 5.

** Matth. xxiii. 33.

But let me forbear invectives. Let me reason with you in the spirit of mildness.—I will suppose you possessed of a pleasant garden. In some favourite bed, many weeds spring up, alluring to the eye, but full of deadly poison. Will you order your gardener, to crop off the *leaves*, or to pluck up the *roots*?—To pluck up the roots, most certainly. Because, if he does the former only, it will avail but little; it will be no better than labour lost: whereas, if he does the latter, he will effectually rid your ground of the pernicious incumbrance.—Thus would I act. Wickedness is this *pernicious* weed. It is full of deadly poison: it pollutes your souls, and will be the bane of your happiness. I would not therefore be content with using the pruning knife, and cutting off the shoots: but I would take the spade, and level my blow at the root.

I would fain have you turn not partially and superficially, but *thoroughly* and *habitually*—not from some only, but from *all* wickedness—and not barely from the practice, but even from the *love* of it, and any *fondness* for it.—This will never be accomplished, unless you turn

From a <i>thoughtless</i>	} state.
From a <i>prayerless</i>	
From an <i>insensible</i>	

1. From a *thoughtless* state.—You are made for eternity; you are immortal beings. You must dwell either with God in heaven, or with devils in hell; and that to endless, endless ages. You know not how soon you may be summoned into the invisible and eternal world; the following night, for aught you can tell; or before the present hour is expired. Do you seriously consider, to which of these everlasting abodes you are approaching? for which of these unchangeable conditions you are meet?

Except a man be born again, says our Lord, *he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven* * This is the fixed determination of the righteous Judge. You all hope for heaven; and I humbly beseech the Lord that you may not be disappointed of your hope. But do you diligently inquire, whether you have experienced this new birth? is there a

* John iii. 3.

spiritual change wrought in your souls? are your affections taken off from vanity, and fixed on the infinitely amiable God? is your memory filled with the truths of the gospel, and are your desires rising to things above? To expect the blessedness of heaven, and have no concern about this renewal of your nature, is to contemn the counsels of Christ, and to trifle with his unalterable decree.

Without holiness no man shall see the Lord *. This is the standing rule for our present conduct, and indispensibly necessary for our future happiness. You may be civil and decent in your behaviour; you may attend the place of divine worship, and pass for reputable persons: yet unless you are holy in your hearts, and holy in your conversation, you cannot enter into God's blissful presence. To be holy is to *put on Christ* †; to resemble Christ, in your spirit and carriage, as one man resembles another, when he puts on his dress, or imitates his manners. Do you look to Christ as your pattern; follow Christ as your guide; and, in the general course of your life, walk as Christ walked?—Perhaps you have never so much as aimed at this; never so much as seriously considered eternity, regeneration, and a conformity to Christ. These things are seldom, if ever in your thoughts: then be assured you are far from holiness: you are not turned from your evil way; no, nor so much as *beginning* to turn.

Say not, “This duty of serious consideration is a slight matter. If I had been guilty of injustice or perjury; if I had committed adultery or murder; these indeed were heinous crimes: whereas, the omission which you have insisted on is but a small offence.”—*Small offence!* Presume not to think so. However such guilt may appear little in your view, or sit easy upon your conscience, it is heinous enough to make heaven and earth amazed. For *thus saith the Lord; Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider* ‡. To say the truth, an inconsiderate careless life is

* Heb. xii. 14.

† Rom. xiii. 14.

‡ Is. i. 2. 3.

an unintermitted course of sin : it is one continued act of rebellion against God.—It opposes his compassionate wish ; *O that they were wise ! that they understood this ! that they would consider their latter end* * !—It disobeys his positive command ; *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*, the supreme Ruler of the world, *Consider your ways* †.—It defeats the design of his holy word, and would make the blood of his Son to be of none effect.

2. Turn from a *prayerless* state. Alas ! how many of those whom we call Christians are strangers to prayer ! How many *servants* rise to their work, and never bend a knee before their Master in heaven ! how many *masters* set their servants an ungodly example ; enter upon the affairs of the day, without imploring the God of all grace, either to prosper their business, or to sanctify their souls ! How many *parents* know not what it is to make earnest supplications for the conversion and salvation of their children ! and how many *children* are as ignorant of the nature, the necessity, the advantages of prayer, “ as the wild ass’s colt ‡ !”

Shall I reckon *these* good people ? are these turned to their God ? No ; they are despisers of the Most High ; they cast contempt upon his Majesty. The language of their practice is, “ Depart from us. Omnipotent as thou art, we have no need of thee : no need of thy Spirit, to make intercession in us ; no need of thy Son to make intercession for us.”—Most justly therefore is it reckoned by Eliphaz, as part of a wicked and abandoned character, *Thou restrainest prayer before God* ||. Nay, it is mentioned by the psalmist as the finishing part, that which seals up the soul under the dominion of iniquity, and shuts out all reasonable hope of a reformation : *they are corrupt ; they do abominable works* ; and there is no prospect of their doing otherwise, since *they call not upon the Lord* §.

Religious, yet neglect prayer ! Impossible. Can a man live without food ? can he breathe without air ? No more can you withstand temptation, or exercise godliness, unless you

* Deut. xxxii. 29.

† Hag. i. 5. 7.

‡ Job xi. 12.

|| Job xv. 4.

§ Psal. xiv. 4.

watch unto prayer *.—The neglect of prayer is not only sinful in itself, but the sure sign of an unsanctified heart, and the wide inlet to every unrighteous practice. “Shew me “a prayerless person,” said one, “and I will shew you “a graceless person.”—Turn then, sinners, turn, without delay, to a habit of prayer; of secret, serious, earnest prayer: otherwise, you cannot expect that the wrath of God should be turned away from you. No; when he whets his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold on judgment, *you* are the persons that cause the indignation; *you* are the persons who have reason to tremble at the stroke. For thus it is written in that venerable book, which is a transcript of the divine will, and the rule of the divine procedure; *Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen, that know thee not; pour out thy fury upon the families that call not on thy name* †.

3. Turn from your *insensible* state.—Be sensible of your guilt, your misery, your ruin. Thoughtless and prayerless people, you are sinners before the God of heaven; you are the children of his wrath; you are the objects of his vengeance; condemned and accursed by his holy word. O! may the Lord of all power rend the vail from your understandings, and shew you your perilous, your dreadfully perilous condition.

If, while I am speaking, the *earth* should *reel* to and fro, and be in strong convulsions under your feet; if it should open its horrid jaws, and gape frightfully wide to devour you; not one in the assembly but would be greatly alarmed. How then can you be careless and unconcerned, when hell from beneath is opening her mouth, to swallow you up in endless perdition? If this building was *rocking* over your heads, and tottering on every side; if the beams were bursting, and the walls cleaving; you would be struck with astonishment and horror. And how is it that you are under no apprehensions, when the indignation of an almighty God is ready to fall upon you? which far more insupportable than the fall of loaded roofs, or ponderous millstones, must even grind you to powder.—If the French

* Eph. vi. 18.

† Jer. x. 25.

were landed, and an army of desperate Papists ravaging the nation; if you were pursued, or surrounded, by those barbarous enemies of your religion and country; if their swords, reeking with British blood, were now at your throats; you would tremble for your lives. And will you not feel some concern for your souls, when the sword of Omnipotence is sharpened to cut you in pieces? when, for aught you know, it may be already unsheathed; may have received a commission to give the fatal blow; and, before another hour passes, may actually strike.—If the late distemper among the cattle should turn to a *plague* among men: if it should sweep away thousands and ten thousands to an untimely grave; if you should see multitudes of your neighbours *sicken, dropping, dying* on every side; certainly you would be terrified. How then can you remain unimpressed, when the curse * of God is approaching you? when the curse of God is hovering over you? when the curse of God is ready to be poured out upon you; and turn all your delights into weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth?

Behold then, sinners, inconsiderate and insensible sinners, you are this day impleaded at God's bar: you are found guilty before the Judge of the world: you are upon the very brink of everlasting destruction.—Not the earth, but *hell*, is opening her mouth to devour you: not the stones and timber of your houses, but the *vengeance* of the Most High, is rushing down upon you. The sword, not of an enraged adversary, but of God's most *tremendous* displeasure is drawn, perhaps stretched out to destroy you: the pestilence, or what is infinitely more to be dreaded than the pestilence that walketh in darkness, the *curse* of God is ready to break forth upon you.—And will not these terrors awaken you, alarm you, persuade you †?—Thou God of the world, and God of our souls, let not thy judgments and thy threatenings go forth in vain!

I hope some of you are inclined to ask—How or to what should we be persuaded? If so, my second particular will suggest the proper answer.

* Gal. iii. 10. † 2 Cor. v. 11.

II. What the wicked man should *turn to*?—*To do that which is lawful and right*: to repent of sin, and love God; to be pure in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation. This is implied in the exhortation of the text; this is the indispensable duty of all men: and to promote this is the continual aim of our ministry.

But you are guilty, ruined, impotent creatures.—*Guilty*, and can you, under a load of trespasses, arise and do your Lord's will?—*Ruined*, and can you, amidst such discouraging circumstances, have any heart to set about the work of reformation?—*Impotent*, and can you, under the most deplorable weakness, perform the most difficult of all services?—No: you must first be relieved and enabled, before you can be sufficient for these things. Like the woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, or like the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, you must receive restoration and strength from God your Saviour. Turn then to Christ, who says by his prophet, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help* *.

If you should enquire, What shall I find in Christ?—All that you can want; all that you can wish: incomparably more than I am able to express. For *it hath pleased the Father, that in Christ should all fulness dwell* †.

Because you are guilty, and have a burden of iniquity on your souls, he is *the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world* ‡: a Lamb of God's own appointing: a Lamb of infinite excellence and dignity; to whom nothing is equal, nothing comparable. This Lamb of God has shed his blood for sinners; has suffered death for sinners; yea, has died in their stead, and endured all that vengeance which they have deserved. In this most wonderful and perfect manner has he obtained their pardon! pardon, not of some only, but of all sins; be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous, it maketh no difference with him. An infinite Saviour taketh away millions, unnumbered millions of the most abominable iniquities, with as much ease as he expiates a single offence, or the smallest fault. *He blotteth out transgressions*, aggravated transgressions, innumerable transgressions, as a

* Hof. xiii. 9.

† Col. i. 19.

‡ John i. 29.

cloud;

cloud *; as easily and as completely as the wind sweeps away a floating cloud from the face of the sky. Delivered from this load of guilt, you will be fitted to *walk* in the way of God's commandments, *and not be weary; yea, to run, and not faint* †.

Because you are *ruined*, and have nothing that may recommend you to the most high God, Christ has brought in a righteousness—a complete righteousness—a divine righteousness. Consider the unspotted purity of his nature, and the unsinning obedience of his life; consider his fervent charity to man, and his patient resignation to God; consider all his exalted virtues, and all his exemplary actions; these, all these, in their utmost perfection, are not only for the imitation, but for the justification also, of such sinners as you and I. *His name is* JEHOVAH, which speaks incomprehensible grandeur in him; JEHOVAH *our righteousness* ‡, which speaks unutterable comfort to us. In this righteousness we may be fully accepted, and entitled to life eternal. Of this we may make our boast, and say, *In the Lord have I righteousness* ||; I, a transgressor, have a real righteousness; I, a defective creature, have a consummate righteousness; I, a frail relapsing Christian, have an inviolable and everlasting righteousness. O! what a treasure is this! what an unspeakable gift is this! Is there a cordial that can revive our spirits, is there a motive that can animate us to duty, like justification through Immanuel's righteousness?—Blessed Lord! this makes thy yoke easy, and thy burden light.

Because you are weak and *disabled*, Christ has the *residue* of the Spirit §; the *fulness* of the Spirit **; the *seven* Spirits of God are before his throne ††. The Holy Ghost, in all his operations, and with all his graces, Christ sends to whomsoever he pleases ††.—He gave this inestimable blessing to Saul the persecutor and blasphemer: he gave this inestimable blessing to many of his murderers and crucifiers: he still confers the heavenly gift on his enemies; *yea,*

* If. xlv. 22. † If. xl. 31. ‡ Jer. xxiii. 6. || If. xlv. 24. § Mal. ii. 15. ** Col. i. 19. †† Rev. i. 4. †† John xvi. 7.

on the rebellious also *. And the promise, the free gracious promise, is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God, by the preaching of his gospel, shall call †.

How salutary and beneficial are the effects of this gift! our Lord himself, who best knew, has admirably shewn. *He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* ‡. This spake he of the Spirit, which every one that turns to him, and believes on him, shall receive. Observe some beautiful and copious river; how it exhilarates the country, and fructifies the soil through which it passes; bestows a thousand conveniencies, and gives birth to a thousand delights, where-ever it takes its winding course. So the Comforter dwelling in the heart, gives such charming views of Christ and his unsearchable riches, as gladden the conscience, and make us truly happy. Hence, as from an inexhaustible source, true holiness flows, and every spiritual good. This disposes us to love our neighbour: this teaches us to be meek in spirit: and this will raise our desires far above earthly, sensual, transitory things; even as David's thoughts were raised far above the shepherd's scrip, when he sat exalted on the throne of Israel.

Under the influence of this divine Spirit, you will say, "Christ has taken away the execrable filth of my sins; and shall I wallow in the mire of iniquity again?—Christ has delivered me from the pit of everlasting destruction; and shall I leap into those unquenchable flames, from which, as a brand, I have been snatched?—In my adorable Redeemer, I have a perfect righteousness, and am completely justified; and shall I not endeavour to walk worthy of such favours; to shew my gratitude for such beneficence, by bringing forth the fruits of righteousness in all my conversation?"

Yes, brethren; when you are turned to Christ, to receive his atonement, to rely on his righteousness, to be filled with his Spirit; it will be with your soul as it is with the earth, when it is turned to the sun. The earth, you

* Psal. lxxviii. 18. † Acts ii. 39. ‡ John vii. 38.

see, is now barren and unfruitful, because it has been very much withdrawn from the enlivening beams of the sun. Ere long it will be replaced under the full influences of that fountain of light and heat. Then what a change will take place! how will the flowers appear on the ground! how will the leaves adorn the trees! how will the singing of birds be heard in our land! So shall holiness and a heavenly temper be produced in your souls: so shall obedience, with all the fruits of godliness, flourish in your lives; when this *Sun of righteousness* manifests himself in your hearts, makes you partakers of his salvation, and thus *arises upon you with healing under his wings* *.

Should any one doubt, whether *this* is the way to do that which is lawful and right; I ask—Is it not a *pleasing* way? such as we should wish for; such as we should prefer above all others; and such as will render our Lord's service perfect freedom?—Is it not a *rational* way? apparently adapted to engage the heart, to strengthen the hand, and thereby to fit the whole man for every good work?

Besides; is it not the way appointed by God?—Would we “earnestly *repent*, and be heartily sorry for all our misdoings?” The wisdom of God assures us, this sorrow must arise from believing views of Christ; from *looking unto him whom we have pierced* †: looking unto him as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. This, if any thing, will incline us to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, for all our abominations. Thus, and thus only, shall we experience that *godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of*.

Would we *love* God? The oracles of heaven inform us, that we must first see his love; his infinitely free, and infinitely tender love towards us; his love not imputing any sin to our souls, but laying all our iniquities upon his own Son. Then shall we *love him*, when we perceive and know, that *he has*, in this most divinely gracious manner, regarded—*loved*—blessed us.

Would we be *pure* in heart? The Lord *purifieth the*

* Mal. iv. 2. † Zech. xii. 10.

heart by faith *; faith in Christ, as shedding his most precious blood, as giving his most glorious person, for our ransom: and, by his one oblation, *finishing our transgression; making reconciliation for our iniquity; yea, perfecting us for ever*; insomuch that we may boldly and assuredly say, *Through this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.* He that hath this faith and this hope *purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Would we *renounce all ungodliness*? would we *live soberly, righteously, and godly* †? By grace we must be enabled; even that grace which brings salvation, a finished and free salvation to sinners. That grace, appearing in the heart, and appropriated by faith, is the sure, the effectual means of true sanctification; the sure, the effectual motive to willing obedience.—Therefore our Lord says, *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me* ‡. *He that eateth me*, that receiveth my righteousness and redemption; that maketh a daily use of me and my benefits, for the refreshment and health of his soul; as people make a daily use of their necessary food for the nourishment and support of their bodies; *even he shall live by me*; he shall live to God in real holiness here, and live with God in everlasting glory hereafter.—This method will strengthen and prepare us for discharging all the duties of a Christian life, as bread strengthens and prepares the labourer for dispatching the business of his toilsome calling. Whereas, without using this sovereign expedient, we shall be as incapable of exercising ourselves unto godliness, as the hireling, deprived of his usual meals, would be incapable of performing his daily task.

Upon the whole, brethren, we do not urge you to make brick without straw: we do not call upon you to arise and work, without shewing you from whence your ability and vigour are to proceed.—Some, perhaps, might exhort you to all holy obedience; but neglecting these most necessary directions, their exhortations would be comfortless and insignificant; because, you might fetch a sigh, and make answer, “All this we would gladly do, but, alas! we are not

* Acts xv. 9. † Tit. ii. 12. ‡ John vi. 57.

“able.”

"able."—Whereas here is grace sufficient for you in Christ. Whatever hinders you, Christ removes; whatever you want, Christ bestows: *that, being delivered from your enemies, and from the hand of all that hate you; from the influence of all that embarrasses, and all that discourages you; you may serve him, without slavish or disquieting fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life* *.

Happy deliverance! thrice happy conduct! but happier still the issue of all! Which reminds me of my last enquiry; namely,

III. What will be the effect of this turning?—*He, the wicked man, thus turned, shall save his soul alive.*

He shall *save*—Safety shall be his companion; safety shall be his guard; safety shall escort him through the dangers of life. All the days of his appointed time *he shall dwell under the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty* †.—Most desirable situation! especially when judgments, desolating and destructive judgments, are abroad.—While the storm of calamity is gathering, or when the tempest of tribulation is raging, O! what a calm must it create in the heart, to have the eternal God for our refuge ‡! to say within ourselves, "The hand that is *stretched over the sea, and shakes the kingdoms of the earth; the hand that rends the mountains, and scatters the everlasting hills* ||; that hand is my defence and my shield!"

Save his *soul*—It is not improbable, but his bodily welfare may be secured. God may set a mark upon his forehead, and command the sword of the destroying angel to pass over his house. But however this may be determined, his soul shall be safe. As to his spiritual welfare, he has a *writ of protection* under the great seal of heaven. The Lord Jesus is his ever-faithful guardian, and *none shall pluck him out of the divine Redeemer's hand* §. The roaring lion may go about, seeking to devour him: but he has a strong city, which the infernal adversary cannot storm; he has an impregnable bulwark, which the powers of darkness cannot

* Luke i. 74. 75. † Psal. xci. 1. ‡ Deut. xxxiii. 27.
|| Hab. iii. 6. § John x. 28.

scale. Though he fall, the arm of Christ will raise him; though he be defiled, the blood of Christ will cleanse him; though he die, it will be no loss, but gain. He that has the keys of the grave will give commandment concerning his mouldering bones; he that lives for evermore will receive his departing soul.—This, perhaps, may be meant by that other emphatical word, *alive*;

He shall save his soul *alive*—He shall not barely be safe, but happy. He shall enjoy what truly deserves the name of life. A man may escape from his enemy, by flying to a fortified castle: but in the castle there may be drought and famine. He may perish by these disasters, though preserved from the pursuing foe. It shall not be thus with the returning, believing, renewed sinner. He shall be saved with a complete and everlasting salvation. He is a child of God, and an heir of glory: he shall rejoice in Christ Jesus here, and shall enter into the joy of his Lord hereafter.—When the earth is burnt up, he shall see it; when the heavens pass away, he shall stand with boldness; when all nature sinks into dissolution, he shall not only survive, but enjoy the ruin. He shall leave a dissolving world, to possess a kingdom in heaven: to wear a crown of righteousness; and to be for ever with, for ever like, his blessed and glorious Lord.

We have now shewn—what the wicked man should turn *from*—what he should turn *to*—what will be the *effect* of this turning.—Give me leave to ask, Has the arm of the Lord been revealed? are you impressed by the awful, or encouraged by the comfortable truths? If so, perhaps you will be ready to say, “Will Christ receive *me*? will he make *me* a partaker of these incomparable benefits? “shall such a one, who is so very *unworthy*, find favour “in his sight?”

Yes, such a one may find favour. Any one, every one who comes, he will receive. He sends his ministers to *invite* you; he sends his judgments to *compel* you; he uses every expedient to *gain* you.—He bids earthquakes tear the foundations of nature, and turn mighty cities into ruinous heaps, that you may be built on that rock which shall never be shaken. He calls the sword of war out of

its

its scabbard, and commands it to be bathed in blood, that you may fly for safety to the Prince of peace. While ruin and desolation are pursuing their dreadful work all around, he throws open the doors of his grace and righteousness, and most compassionately cries, "Come, my people; come, poor offenders; enter into these chambers, and find rest*."

Is any of you still inclined to reply, "Will Christ indeed receive me, who am not only a sinner—but a *great* sinner—a *long persisting* sinner—and now seem to come but at the *last hour*; more like one driven by fear, than drawn by love?"—What thinkest thou? would the widow of Nain, who went mourning after the corpse of her only son, almost inconsolable with her loss; would she be unwilling to receive him, when our Lord reanimated the cold clay, and *delivered him alive to his mother* †? Would she need much importunity, and hardly be prevailed on, to embrace her beloved, her lamented child? Impossible to suppose. Remember what Christ has *done* for sinners; what he has *suffered* for sinners; how his bowels *yearn* over sinners; and it will appear equally impossible that he should reject any returning profligate.

Reject! No. The good father, aged and venerable as he was, hastened, yea, *ran* to meet the prodigal. He fell on his neck, and tenderly kissed the dissolute youth ‡. So, with such readiness and such compassion, will the everlasting Father receive you to his family, his favour, his love.—Nay more, he will receive you with *joy*. He is the good Shepherd; you are the lost sheep: he is come in his word to seek you; when you turn to him, he has found you. Then, says the scripture, the good Shepherd goes home with his recovered sheep, *rejoicing* ||. O let your minister, and (which is unspeakably more engaging) let the blessed Jesus have joy of you, my brethren: even that Jesus by whom sinners are *dearly beloved and longed for* §; who has no greater delight than to save them from their iniquities, and number them among his children.

* Is. xxvi. 20.

† Luke vii. 15.

‡ Luke xv. 20.

§ Luke xv. 5.

|| Phil. iv. 1.

If you should answer—"This is a matter of the utmost importance. It lies at the very root of all my comfort. Let me hear it confirmed from our Lord's own mouth. *I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me* *."

Hear then his own *promise*; the most precious promise that words can form, or fancy conceive; *Whoever cometh to me*, for pardon, for justification, for holiness, *I will in no wise cast him out* †.—*Whoever*; whether he be high or low, learned or illiterate; whether he be a servant or a master, a prince or a beggar; no one is excepted, no one shall be refused.—*In no wise*; on no consideration of past transgressions, on no account of present depravity, on no foreknowledge of future failings. Only let him come, *only let him come*, and nothing shall debar him from the enjoyment of my benefits; nothing shall separate him from the endearments of my love.

Hear his kind *invitation*; *Return unto me, for I have redeemed you* ‡. Ye that have hitherto been strangers to seriousness, and always alienated from me; *turn unto me*, and I will not so much as upbraid you || with your folly.—Ye that are now backsliders, and have for a season ungratefully departed from me; *turn unto me*, and I will heal your backslidings; my stripes shall make you whole.—Ye that have been slaves to vice; have sold yourselves to work wickedness; and are grown old in abominable practices; it is not too late even for you. *I have redeemed* even such as you.—I shake the pillars of nature, and rock the foundations of the world; *I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering* §. Yet, for such as you, *I gave my back to the smiters, and hid not my face from shame and spitting* **. Yes, sinners; sinners of every kind; I bore the curse of the law, and died the death of the cross, on purpose that I might redeem such as you.—Most amiable Redeemer! who would not listen to a call so wonderfully endearing? Sinners, how can you withstand a motive so sweetly constraining?

Hear his solemn *oath*; *As I live, saith the Lord God, I*

* Psal. lxxxv. 8. † John vi. 37. ‡ Is. xlv. 22.
 || Jam. i. 5. § Is. l. 3. ** Vers. 6.

have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel*? Was there ever any declaration so charming? or any address so affectionate?—See! how the high and lofty One condescends! He commands in heaven, on earth, through hell; yet, more like a suppliant than a sovereign, he vouchsafes to solicit and beseech you. From the habitation of his glory he cries, *Turn ye*, poor perishing creatures.—Again he cries, *Turn ye* to your God and Saviour; that ye may be delivered from all your transgressions, and iniquity may not be your ruin.—To take away all your reluctance, he pleads, he expostulates, *Why will ye die?* why will ye destroy yourselves, and be undone for ever?—That you may have no doubt of a free pardon and a favourable reception, *he swears*; swears by himself, by his own life and immortal perfections, that he *has no pleasure in your death*; but shall rejoice, infinitely rejoice in your recovery and salvation.

Here then you have the *promise*, the *invitation*, the *oath* of the Lord. Can there be greater encouragement? will not this threefold cord draw you?—Should you say, “I cannot turn: I am tied and bound with the chain of my corruptions. O! that Christ”—Fear not: he will, he will. He that sends his minister to give you this exhortation; he that has sent his Spirit to work this desire in your soul; he that spilt his blood to obtain all blessings for you; he will put forth his strength, and turn you to himself. He stretched his beneficent hand, and saved Peter from sinking in the tempestuous sea. What he did for him is a pattern and a pledge of what he is ready to do for you.—Only continue to seek his face; let your heart talk of him; set his unbounded goodness and almighty power before your eyes; meditate on his infinite propitiation and incomprehensible merits; consider his everlasting righteousness and never-ceasing intercession: look upon all these as your own. To look upon them as *your own*, you have a *warrant*, you have a *command*.—And if Christ has done so great things for you, you may assuredly believe, that, in his due time,

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

in his wise manner, he will *bring you spiritual health and cure*; he will carry on what he has begun, and enable you to grow in grace. He will comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good work.

Shall I proceed?—I have already been copious, perhaps somewhat tedious. Yet you will bear with me on this distinguished and solemn occasion: yes, you will bear with me a little longer: for I am loth, very loth to dismiss you, without persuading you. Persuading! alas, I cannot. *God, and none but God, can persuade Japheth* *. However, as an instrument in his all powerful hand, let me address you once again.

I observe several persons here, on this day of humiliation, who very rarely attend the public worship.—Why, my friends, why do you wrong your own souls? why do you withdraw yourselves from the preaching of the gospel? Know ye not, that *Jesus passeth by* †, in the way of his ordinances? Here you may, like Bartimeus of old, approach the Son of David; here you may obtain faith and holiness. Faith cometh by hearing, and holiness by the word of God. And are not these blessings worth your attendance? can you live happily without them? can you die comfortably without them? or can you, without them, be prepared to meet your God, when he cometh to judge the world?—Why should you forsake the assembling yourselves together? do you hear terrifying or distressing doctrines in this place? is not this the house of praise, as well as of prayer? does not the *joyful sound* echo under these roofs? is not Christ set forth crucified before your eyes? crucified for such offenders as you! crucified that such offenders as you may be pardoned, may be accepted, may be glorified! And will you despise such a divinely compassionate Saviour? will you refuse such astonishingly rich mercies? O! that hereafter you may *be glad when they say unto you, Let us go into the courts of the Lord* ‡.

Should my wishes prove vain, I have at least delivered my message. If you perish through obstinacy and unbelief,

* Gen. ix. 27.

† Matth. xx. 30.

‡ Psal. cxxii. 1.

I am clear from your blood. I call heaven and earth to witness, you have been *warned*, you have been *instructed*, you have been *exhorted*. You cannot say, you perish for lack of knowledge; for life and salvation have been set before you, have been brought to your very door, and you are importuned to lay hold of them. You will therefore be without excuse, and have no cloke for your guilt.

But why should I leave you with such melancholy apprehensions. Let me hope better things of you: let me hope that you will not disregard *these* admonitions, however you may have disregarded *too many* exhortations of this kind. This is a remarkable day: O! that it may be memorable on account of your turning to God. Let this be its distinction through all your future life; let this be its distinction through all the ages of eternity: that you may say—when death summons you into the invisible state; when the trump of God calls you to the great tribunal; when you mingle with saints and angels, in the kingdom of heaven—“Blessed be God for that solemn day, and its sacred exercises! That was the day of my better birth. Then I began to consider; then I began to pray; then I began to see my undone condition, and my extreme need of a Saviour: then too I saw Jesus, giving himself a sacrifice for my sins, and redeeming me to God with his blood.”—Happy! thrice happy! inexpressibly happy day! if *thus*, if *thus* improved!

You have, I presume, abstained from your usual food, as you have been joining in confession, supplication and prayer. This is well done: but this is only half; rather, it is, by infinite degrees, the smallest part of your duty. It is not said, when the wicked man abstaineth from his usual food; but *when he turneth from his wickedness*, as the consequence of his believing in Christ. It is not said, when the wicked man joins in public confession to God; but when *he doth that which is lawful and right*, as a fruit of his fellowship with Christ: then he shall *save*—he shall save *his soul*—he shall save his soul *alive*. O that all, from the king on the throne, to the labourer in the barn; from the highest nobleman, to the meanest tradesman; that all might now be inclined, now be enabled, to turn unto the Savi-

our of the world. In him millions, unnumbered millions of wretched sinners, have found recovery and liberty; *recovery* from the death, and *liberty* from the bondage of sin. And (blessed be his unbounded grace) yet *there is room*.

Then the national fast would be a *national blessing*. Whereas, without this all-important turning to the adorable Saviour, what will the formalities of our devotion signify? They will be a mere lip-labour, a religious trifling: nay, they will be a solemn mockery of the Almighty, and provoke his abhorrence.—Does not JEHOVAH himself speak to the same purpose? *Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him *?* to discontinue your ordinary business, and refrain from a meal's meat? to make a little doleful lamentation, and put up a few petitions extorted by fear? *Will you call this a fast?* saith the high and holy One, with an air of sovereign contempt; *this an acceptable day to the Lord?* No verily: it is the most odious hypocrisy; like crying, Hail master, with the tongue, while treachery and enmity fill the heart: *unless* you turn to Christ, that you may be washed, that you may be justified, that you may be sanctified; that, having remission of sins through his blood, and peace of conscience through his grace, you may feel the bands of wickedness loosed, and may become the willing servants of righteousness.

What is the *grand sin* of our nation? Ignorance and neglect of Christ.—What is the *cause* of all our other sins? Ignorance and neglect of Christ.—Why are the *judgments* of the Almighty hanging over our heads? For ignorance and neglect of Christ. Never, therefore, shall we answer the end of our sacred assembly, nor the design of God's alarming visitations, till we begin to know Christ, to receive Christ, to make use of Christ by faith. When this is done, we may reasonably hope—that our prayers will go up with acceptance, and not return again, till a blessing be sent—that, as individuals, our *light shall break forth like the morning*, and our *health shall spring forth speedily*—that,

* Is. lviii. 5.

as a community, *the favour of God shall go before us, and the glory of the Lord shall be our reward* *.

Then may we look around on our most enraged enemies, and say with the psalmist, *Though an host of men should encamp against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid* †—Then we may look backward to the late desolating earthquake, and say with the believers of old, *God is our refuge and strength; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea* ‡—Then may we look forward to an incomparably more dreadful scene, even to the righteous Judge, and the great tribunal, and say with the triumphant apostle, *Who shall lay any thing to our charge? It is God that justifieth; who shall condemn us? It is Christ that died* ||.

Let me entreat you therefore, brethren, for the sake of your own immortal souls, and for the welfare of our endangered nation; let me charge you, by all that is desirable in time, and awful in eternity, not to neglect these counsels. Being so solemnly reprov'd, if you *harden your neck*, your destruction cometh suddenly, and *that without remedy* §. Having these warnings from the divine word, and warnings from the divine providence, *if ye still do wickedly*; it is not man, it is not an angel, it is God himself who declares, *Ye shall be consumed—even ye—your country---and your king* **.

* Is. lviii. 8.

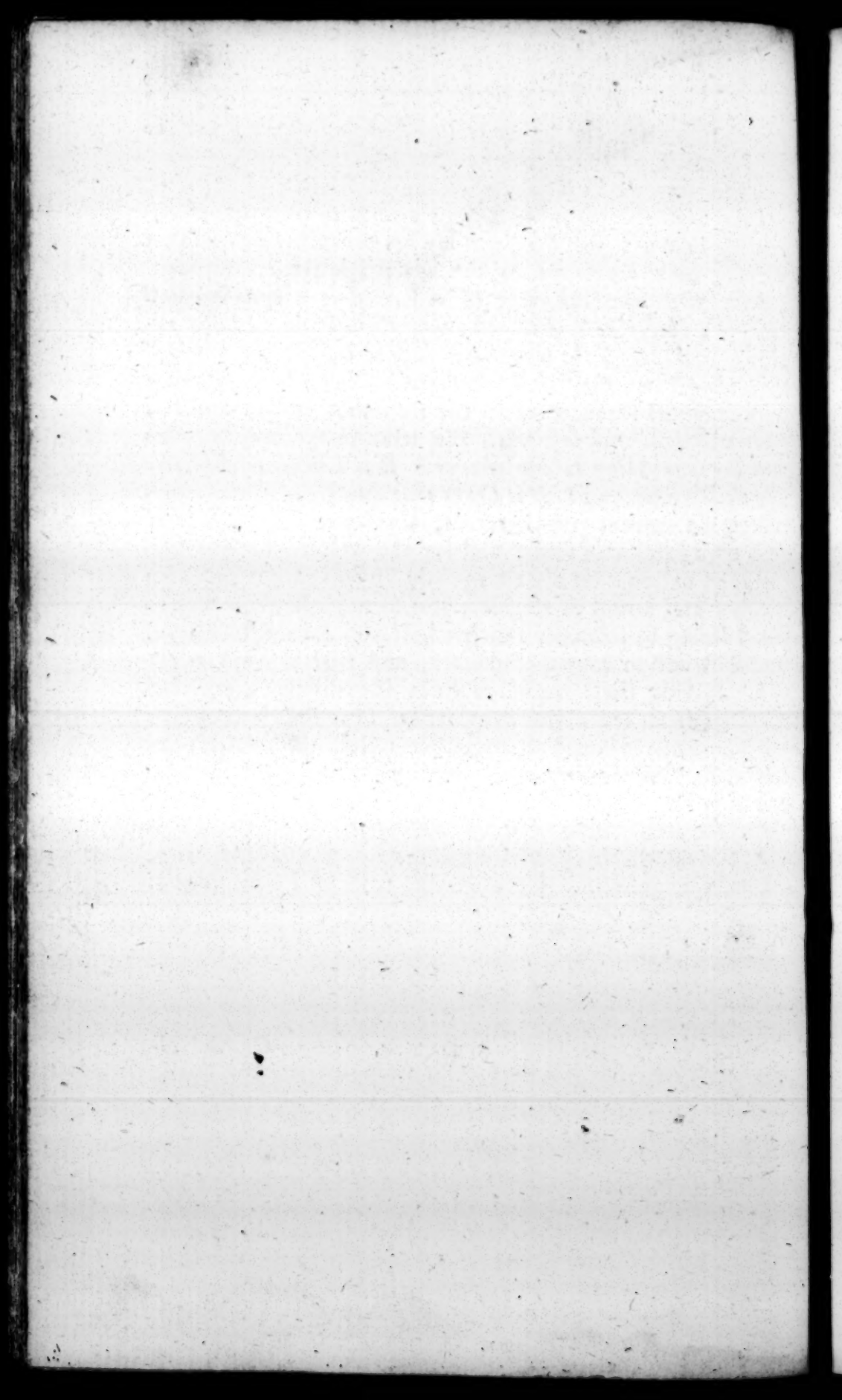
† Psal. xxvii. 3.

‡ Psal. xli. 1. 2.

|| Rom. viii. 33. 34.

§ Prov. xxix. 1.

** 1 Sam. xii. 25.



CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PREVAILING CUSTOM

OF

VISITING

ON THE

SABBATH.

P R E F A C E.

*T*H E sentiments here offered against the prevailing custom of profaning the Sabbath, will probably be a satisfaction to every serious reader, and be productive of much good, especially as it is in every body's power to reform one, and as then his own conduct will be a tacit reproof to his acquaintance, who may probably through his example, be induced to weigh these proceedings attentively, and no longer follow a multitude to do evil.—It is certainly a matter of importance to inquire, Whether Sabbath visits are justifiable upon the principles of scripture and of reason? as the conscientious observation of the Sabbath has of late years been so much disregarded; and as it is now become the principal day of visiting among persons of all ranks.—The chief advocates for the continuance of such a practice should, methinks, defend it publicly, that their arguments may be properly examined, if, in their opinion, such a custom can admit of any rational defence. And those, who are sufficiently convinced by what is here advanced, should resolve to discontinue Sabbath-visits themselves, and discountenance them in others, as far as they can, consistent with decency and prudence.—That the number of such well-disposed persons may be daily increasing, is undoubtedly the hearty wish of every one who is sincerely desirous of promoting the glory of God, and the good of mankind.

C O N.

CONSIDERATIONS

On the prevailing custom of

VISITING on the SABBATH.

QUESTION.

Whether it be right for TRULY SERIOUS persons to visit on the Sabbath?

THE persons here mentioned, are the *truly serious*. As to *many* people, it matters not whether they are at home or abroad: God is not in all their thoughts; they have no concern for their eternal welfare; they therefore are, in every place, altogether and alike unprofitable.

But when we begin to discern the things that are excellent; when we sincerely desire to *obtain salvation, with eternal glory, by Jesus Christ; then*, whether it be proper to fall in with the prevailing custom of visiting on the Sabbath, is the question.

Were our companions religious, and was our conversation edifying, I should make no scruple to give my voice in the affirmative. Every parlour would then be a little sanctuary; would echo back the exhortations, and second the designs of the pulpit. And we might truly say, *It is good for us to be here.*

But, alas! where do we find such company? When do we hear such conversation? The general conversation is all impertinence. Not so much as seasoned with a spice of religion. *They talk of vanity every one with his neighbour* *. For which reason, I cannot think it safe or expedient, allowable or innocent, habitually to visit on the Sabbath.

* Psal. xii. 2.

It is inconsistent with the best example. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, says St John. I was filled with the communications of the holy Spirit, giving me clear views of Christ, bright hopes of glory, and shedding abroad the love of God in my heart. But is this compatible with the idle, trifling, insignificant chat, which engrosses our ordinary visits?

OBJECTION I. Will it be said, the apostle's was a peculiar case? I answer. It was a peculiarly happy case. And will a prudent Christian relinquish the prospect of such unspeakable happiness, for the most empty and delusory amusement? But, I believe, it was not peculiar to the apostle; rather the common privilege of all believers; written, as a pattern for their practice, and to be the plan of their expectations.

It is contrary to the divine prohibition. The negative law, relating to the Sabbath, is, *Not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, not speaking thy own words**, *Not doing thy own ways*; abstaining from secular business, and all worldly pursuits. *Not finding thy own pleasure*; renouncing all those recreations and amusements, which may tend to gratify thy taste, not to glorify thy almighty Lord. *Not speaking thy own words*; conversing on spiritual, sublime, and heavenly subjects, not on low, earthly, temporal matters, which, having no reference to the Creator's honour, are therefore called thy own. However some people may act, or whatever they may think, this is the express and unalterable law, established by the God of heaven. Whether it be possible to mingle in modish company, and obey this law, let those judge who are acquainted with the world.

It breaks the divine command. The positive law relating to the Sabbath, is, *Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy*. Remember, take particular notice of this injunction. It is a duty greatly to be regarded, and most conscientiously to be observed. Upon the due observance of this, our disposition and ability, to observe the other precepts, in good measure, depends. *Keep it holy*; devote it to holy pur-

* If. lviii. 13.

poses; spend it in holy exercises: and not barely an hour or two; not barely the intervals of private and public devotion; but the day; the Sabbath-day; the whole day. Neither will the whole day be too long, if we make conscience of discharging the several duties of religion, reading and meditation; prayer and praise; teaching our children, and instructing our domestics; examining our hearts, and taking heed to our ways. All these offices, if properly performed, will leave very little, rather no time for unnecessary elopements. And shall we huddle over all these important offices, or totally neglect some of them, only to indulge ourselves in the most unprofitable levities? at once doing an injury to our spiritual interests, and violating the divine precept.

I fear, it will be a kind of *crucifying afresh our blessed Master* *. This expression we have often read, but think ourselves free from the guilt implied in it, and indeed from the very likelihood of contracting it. But let us be reminded, that *we crucify our Lord afresh*, when we give others occasion to conclude, that we have very little esteem for him, or gratitude to him, consequently, that he has little or no excellency, for which we or others should desire him. Now what else can the world conclude, when they see us giving into the vanities of a licentious mode, on that very day, which is sacred to the commemoration of his resurrection? "Surely, might the children of this world say, "if these Christians had any real reverence for their Lord, "they would shew it on *his own day*. They would either "be retired to contemplate and adore him; or else come abroad to exalt and glorify him. But they come abroad "to be as frothy in their talk, and as trifling in their temper, "as forgetful of their Saviour, and as regardless of his honour, as the most arrant worldling among us all." To afford a handle for such reflections, is to wound the Redeemer in the house of his friends.

It will *grieve the holy Spirit* †. Christians believe, that he is infinitely wise, all-gracious, and ever-blessed: that he dwells in their hearts, and is the source of all their ho-

* Heb. vi. 6.

† Eph. iv. 30.

liness and all their happiness. Therefore we pray daily in our liturgy, *that the holy Spirit may not be taken from us.* On Sabbath, we commemorate the descent of this divine guest; and are, in a particular manner, to implore his presence, and cultivate his influences. But can this be done, by neglecting his express prohibition, and breaking his positive command? by disregarding the examples, which he has set before us; and dishonouring that Saviour, whom he delights to magnify? Besides, dare any mortal presume to say in his heart, amidst a circle of our polite visitants, "I am now acting in a manner, becoming my relation to the eternal Spirit. These sentiments and this discourse are suitable to his dignity, wisdom, and glory. A proper method of celebrating and honouring the day of his miraculous mission?"

Should any one ask, "What is meant by *grieving the holy Spirit?*" It means offending his exalted Majesty, and causing him to act as men commonly act, when they are grieved and displeased with any one. They withdraw from his company, and visit him no more. When Samuel was grieved for Saul's misbehaviour, it is written, *He came no more to see Saul.* If the almighty Comforter be provoked to deal thus with our souls, alas! what a loss must we sustain! A loss, unspeakable, irreparable, eternal!

So that if this practice were not sinful, it must be exceedingly detrimental. And that, not in one only, but in various respects. Have we received spiritual good from the public ordinances? The admonition of Heaven is, *We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip* *. By this practice, we not only suffer them to slip, but open as it were a leak for their immediate discharge. Have we been under edifying impressions from our private exercises? The unerring direction is, *Quench not the Spirit.* Stifle not the serious desires, which he has awakened. Allow them their full scope, till they are formed into gracious habits. By the practice under consideration, we pour water instead of

* Heb. ii. 1.

oil upon the feeble flame ; we extinguish what we should cherish. Is the heavenly seed sown in our breasts ? These dissipating interviews are the ravenous birds, which follow the seed-man, and devour the grain ; so that nothing takes root. No fruit of faith, of joy, or love, is produced.

Let me only add, that, on a dying-bed, the mis-improvement of all our time will be most bitterly regretted. How much more the mis-improvement of *those* hours, which God himself has hallowed : has set apart for the noblest purposes ; and is wont to bless in an especial manner ! “ While
“ others were seeking the pearl of great price ; and gather-
“ ing those treasures of wisdom and grace, which endure
“ to everlasting life ; I, alas ! was squandering away the
“ precious opportunities in very vanity.” To see the curtain of time dropping ; to see a vast eternity opening before us ; and to have such reflections haunting our conscience : this will cause misery, not to be expressed ; create anguish, not to be conceived.

OBJECT. II. Will it be said, in answer to these considerations, “ That company, even trifling company, is a relaxation. We return to the instruction of our families, and to our evening devotion, with fresh alacrity, being sick of these triflers ? ” A strange argument ! It should rather be reversed. The objectors might truly say ; Being sick of religion and its services, we want such triflers to afford us some relief. The sincere servant of Christ would find no recreation, but feel grief of heart, in such interviews. It must be a real affliction to observe his divine Lord absolutely disregarded. Disregarded on the day peculiarly devoted to his honour. Every vanity now preferred before him, as Barabbas the robber was formerly. The true refreshment of our souls consists in having our faith increased, our hope elevated, and our views of heaven enlarged : in contemplating the infinite perfection and glory of our Redeemer ; the infinite grandeur and fulness of his propitiation ; and our complete, I might have said, our infinite security from wrath and vengeance, by being interested in his merits.

OBJECT. III. “ The Sabbath is the best part of our time for this purpose. Business is suspended. Every body is

“ ready dressed. All circumstances invite.” Is it the best part of our time? Then let it be devoted to the best of beings. Who is more worthy of our choicest thoughts, affections, hours, than that divinely compassionate Saviour, who offered himself, in the very prime of his life, a bleeding victim for our sins, that his sacrifice might have every recommending circumstance, which could render it acceptable to God, and available for man?

OBJECT. IV. “ It is the universal custom. To discontinue it, would render us unfashionable.” And cannot you bear to be a little unfashionable for his sake, who was despised and rejected, who humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross, for your sake? Is it the universal custom? Then custom is the idol, which we are called to renounce. I must say of custom, in this case, as Elijah said of Baal; If custom be God, follow its dictates; but if JEHOVAH be God, observe his precepts. It is written in the scriptures, *Be not conformed to this world* *. To what does this prohibition relate? To such ungodly customs, no doubt. No battery of cannon was ever pointed more directly against a citadel to be demolished, than this text against such customs. In indifferent matters, let the Christian avoid singularity. Let him dress somewhat like his neighbours. Let him make an appearance suitable to his station. But let him not follow a multitude to profane the Sabbath, or to *do any evil*. Here religious persons should, by all means, be singular; should distinguish themselves by a becoming zeal for their God; should set an example, and shine as lights, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Otherwise, they may do, not themselves only, but others also, incredible harm.

OBJECT. V. Some perhaps may start, and reply, “ If these things are so, to what a degree of sinful negligence is even the Christian world arrived!”—With regard to the world called Christian, this is too true. And no measure of sorrow can be sufficient to bewail the deplorable degeneracy. Negligence, or rather obstinacy, in this capital

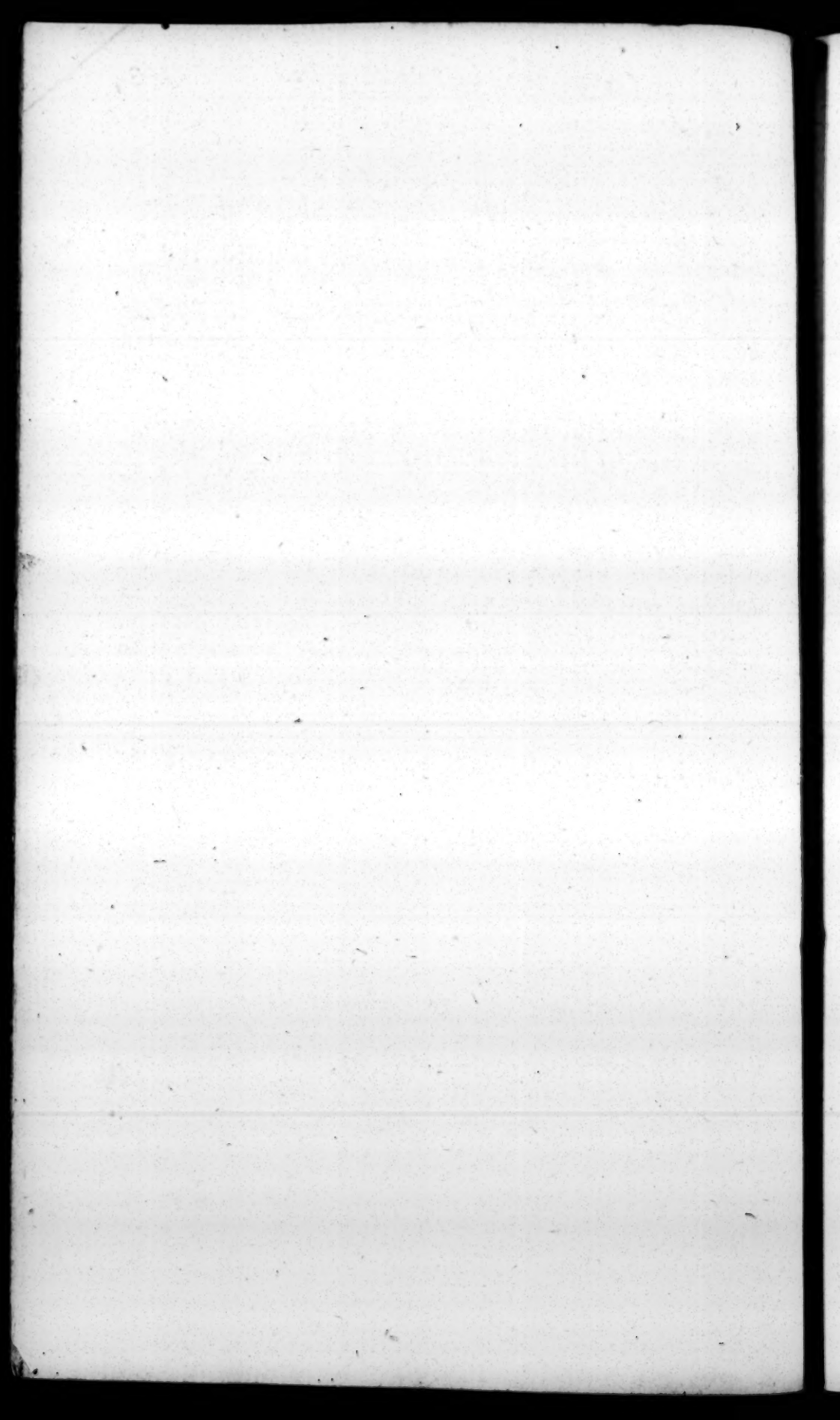
* Rom. xii. 2,

instance, is a melancholy indication of no less disobedience in other respects.

OBJECT. VI. "This will be irksome, will render our religion a burden." I hope, no one that pretends to seriousness will offer to make this objection. The sinners in Sion made it. For which reason they are branded, and by the divine Spirit himself, with infamy that will never be blotted out. *O! what a weariness is it! when will the Sabbath, and its irksome solemnities, be gone**? This discovers a heart alienated from God; that has not tasted the good word of grace, and favours not the things which be of Christ. Otherwise, such would be the language; *One day, thus employed, is better than a thousand*†. Is it tedious and burthen some to pass a single day in devout exercises? how then shall we pass, how shall we endure the ages of eternity? since we are assured, that those happy beings, who stand around the throne, cloathed with white robes, serve their God day and night, for ever and ever, in his temple. In the regions of immortality they find a heaven; because, there they have a never-ceasing and eternal communion with God, because there they have an uninterrupted and everlasting Sabbath.

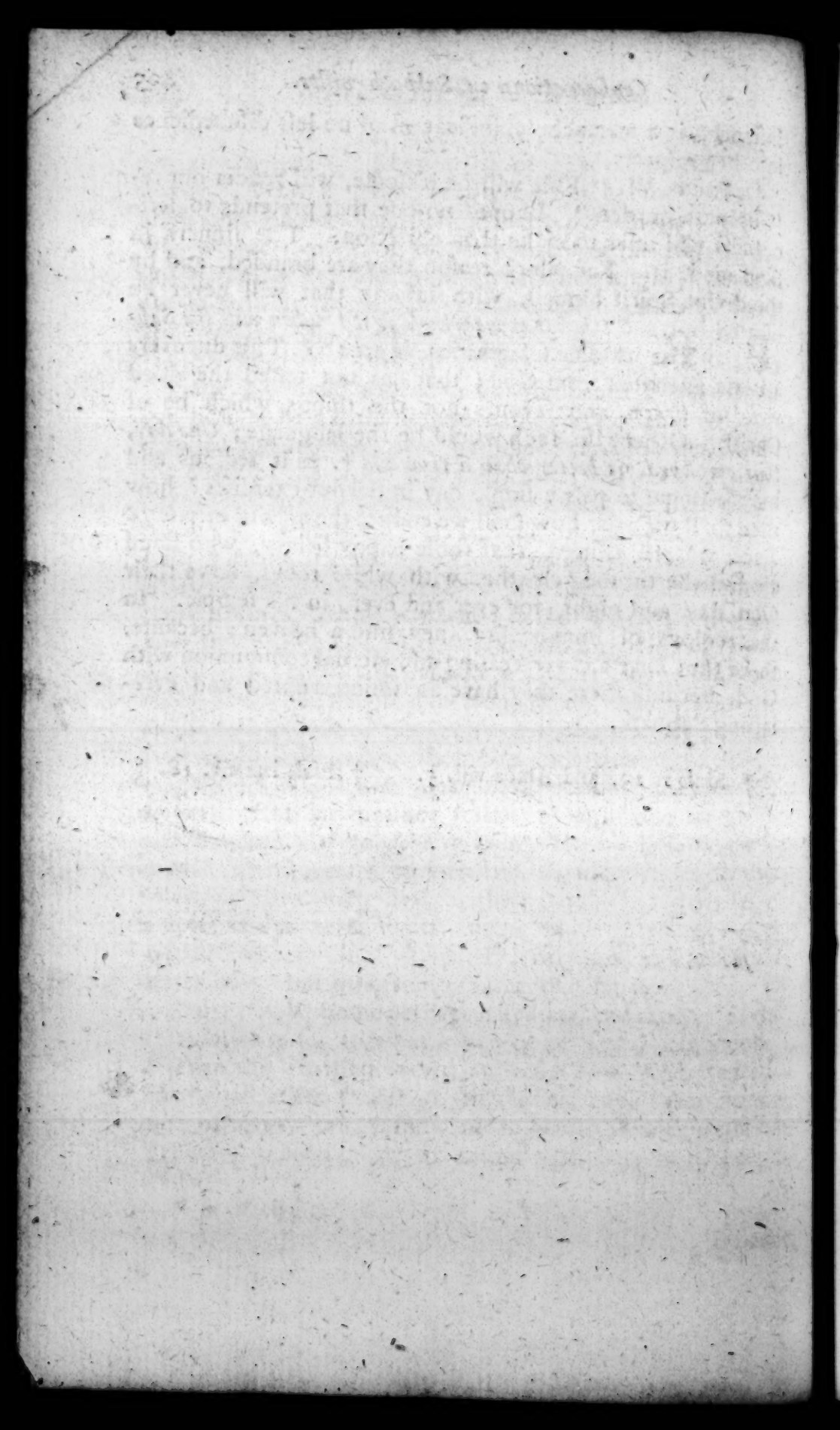
* Mal. i. 13. and Amos viii. 5.

† Psal. lxxxiv. 18.



A
T R E A T I S E
ON THE
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
OF
D A U G H T E R S.

*Train up a child in the way she should go; and when she is old,
she will not depart from it, Prov. xxii. 6.*



A
T R E A T I S E
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she will not depart from it, Prov. xxii. 6.*

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

*A*S this little Treatise was intended for the Press, by the late Reverend Mr HERVEY, he had transcribed it from his short-hand copy:—The candid reader will, however, make the proper allowances for a posthumous piece, which would undoubtedly have appeared less defective, had it been revised by the ingenious AUTHOR.

ON THE
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
OF
DAUGHTERS.

IT has long been a prevailing report, that, among persons of education and distinction, true religion is very rare. This, I would hope, is an invidious rumour, rather than a true representation of the case. May it not be an artifice of the grand enemy? calculated to bring the best and noblest of causes into disrepute: as though politeness and piety were inconsistent: as though grace and good-breeding were irreconcilable.—Is then the faith of Christ quite fatal to refined manners? as the rod of Moses was to the counterfeit miracles of the magicians. No: it is rather like the influence of the sanctuary on the rod of Aaron; which, while it remained at a distance from the tabernacle, was a dry, sapless, and barren stick; but when deposited before the ark, was quickened into vegetable life, was adorned with a milk-white bloom, and enriched with full-grown fruit: or, as the sacred historian expresses this surprising fact, “It brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.” Numb. xvii. 8.

I find upon the list of saints, the most renowned kings, and victorious generals; the ablest politicians, and the greatest philosophers: men, that have bid the sun stand still, and prolong the departing day; have laid an embargo upon darkness, and protracted the shades of night; have commanded the ground to cleave asunder, and transmit their presumptuous foes to a strange and inevitable destruction; have divided the impetuous waves, and led their followers to safety and to conquest, through the depths of the sea. Men, who have walked in the burning fiery furnace, as under the shelter of an embowering arbour; and sat in the

lion's den, amidst a herd of hungry monsters, with as much serenity, and as much security, as amidst a circle of bosom friends.

I myself have known various persons, admired for their accomplished behaviour, and revered for their exalted station, who have thought it their highest honour to be servants of Jesus Christ. My excellent friend Camillus, at whose house I now reside, is one of the number. I cannot refrain from giving a pourtrait of Camillus; or rather, of a few of his most distinguishing features; for, to paint him in full proportion, as he daily appears, in all the mild, the benign majesty of—domestic authority—parental government—and Christian zeal—to do this, would require a much abler hand than mine.

Camillus not long ago entertained in his house a young clergyman, who was always treated with a respect, suitable to the dignity of his office, and the piety of his behaviour. Having lately presented the worthy ecclesiastic to a living, and always requiring residence on the benefice, he is now destitute of a chaplain. Remembering, however, that all Christians are spiritual priests; he thinks it no dishonour, to have an immediate and personal audience with the King of heaven; nor acting at all out of character, to represent the wants of his household, with his own mouth, at the throne of grace.

Before supper is introduced, the evening incense ascends. This, rather than a later hour is pitched upon, that the little congregation may join in the sacred service, with a lively devotion. After a plentiful meal, when the limbs are weary, people, even though kneeling, and in the presence of God, are more inclined to nod than to pour out their souls; are very, very apt to mistake the cushion for a pillow.—No servant is allowed to be absent; one only excepted, whose presence in the kitchen is absolutely necessary. Acquainted with their master's resolution, they are careful, so to manage their affairs, and dispatch their business; that no avoidable obstacle may intervene, to detain them from the stated worship.

When all are assembled, without either tumultuous disorder in their approach, or a slovenly negligence in their apparel,

apparel, a chapter is read. Camillus makes the choice. He imagines, it is not so useful for his family, whose memories are weak, and their capacities scanty, to read the lesson for the day. He has, therefore, selected some of the most instructive and animating portions of scripture; and judges it adviseable to peruse these again and again, rather than to go regularly through the whole inspired writings.—The servants take it by turns to read; which improves them in the practice, and keeps them awake. If any of them discovers a disposition to sleep, to him the office is sure to be assigned.

When the chapter is finished, Camillus singles out some one verse, of very weighty and edifying import; which, for the space of five or six minutes, he explains, applies, and affectionately urges upon their consciences.—This done, with great seriousness, and profound reverence, he offers up evening prayers. His prayers consist of short sentences, and the whole is performed in a little time. Every part is pronounced with that deliberate slowness, and solemn accent, which command attention, and create awe. He makes a very perceivable pause, at the close of each petition; that every one may have leisure to add, in silence, a hearty amen; and to recollect the merits of that blessed Redeemer, which render every thanksgiving acceptable, and every supplication successful.

In the morning, before breakfast, the worship of the living God is renewed. At this juncture, Camillus omits the chapter; but requires one of his domestics to repeat the verse, on which he enlarged the preceding night. None knows, which shall be called to this task; therefore, every one is obliged to be properly prepared. He throws the substance of his exhortation, into a few searching and interesting questions; which he addresses to one of his children or servants: for, in this respect, no difference is made. All are equally enjoined to remember: all are equally accountable for what they hear.—Sometimes, he encourages those, whose answers shew, that they have given diligent heed to his instructions. Sometimes, he puts on an air of severity, mixed with tenderness, and reproves the notoriously negligent. Always, he re-inculcates the principal points;

charging them to retain the doctrines in their memory, and revolve them in their thoughts, while they are pursuing their respective business — These doctrines are the seed of faith; the root of godliness. Unless these be lodged in the mind, and operate on the heart, he never expects to have his domestics commence true believers, or real Christians. No more than the husbandman can reasonably expect a crop in harvest, without sowing his field; or the florist promise himself a blow of tulips, without planting his parterre.

I have given a glimpse of Camillus, at the head of his family; let me now shew my favourite in another attitude. — Camillus is convinced, that no trust is of superior, or of equal importance, to the tuitionary cultivation* of an immortal soul. As Providence has blessed him with two fine daughters, their present and future happiness, is the reigning object of his care. He has no interest so much at heart, as to give them a truly refined education; such as may render them an ornament and a blessing to society, while they pass the time of their sojourning here below; and may train them up for a state of everlasting bliss, when the world and its transitory scenes shall be no more.

Camillus never could persuade himself to admire the maxims of prudence, said to be gathered from the extravagant rant of our tragedies; and less is his esteem for those modest dispositions, which people pretend to imbibe from the luscious gallantries of comedy. For which reason, he has no impatient desire, to secure for Miss Mitissa and Miss Serena, a place in the front box. — However, as we are apt immoderately to covet, what is absolutely forbidden, he has himself attended them, once or twice, to the theatrical entertainments, and public diversions: thinking it much

* *Sensere, quid mens rite, quid indoles
Nutrita faustis sub penetralibus
posset.*

Hor.

The meaning of which in English is:

“What could be done we know, were we but led
“By bright example, and by virtue bred.”

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the safest method, that their curiosity should be gratified under his own inspection: and hoping to make them sensible, how much they endanger their virtue, who too often frequent them; how shamefully they debase their affections, who are passionately fond of them; and what mere phantoms they follow, who seek for satisfaction in such delusory delights.

They learn to dance, in order to acquire a genteel air, and a graceful demeanor; not to shine at a ball, or win the worthless admiration of fops.—He is content to have them unacquainted with the wild and romantic fables of Heathen poetry. Nor is under any painful apprehensions of damping the sprightliness of their temper, though they have no taste for the chimerical adventures of our romances, and are strangers to the loose intrigues of our novels. Being fully persuaded, that there is as much sound sense, as smartness of thought, in that celebrated saying,

Retire, and read your Bible, to be gay,

*There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace *!*

He has introduced them to the knowledge of history, and its instructive facts. They have a tolerable idea of the four universal monarchies; so eminent for their great events, and so circumstantially foretold in scripture. They have been led through the most remarkable transactions of our own country, and are pretty well acquainted with the present state of Europe. They have, all along, been taught to observe the wonderful revolutions of empires, and the adorable procedure of Providence: that they may discern how *the fashion of this world passeth away* †; and how happy

* Dr Young's eighth night-thought.

† 1 Cor. vii. 31. Not only the little projects, and puny achievements, of private persons; but the power of distinguished families; the policies of mighty states; the magnificence of the greatest kingdoms; all, all are in a state of perpetual fluctuation. They *fade away* (as the apostle most significantly describes the case) like the graceful and glossy aspect of some delicate flower, when the sun arises with a scorching heat, Jam.

py are the people, how happy the persons, *who have the Lord for their God*. They have been taught to observe the honourable success, that has usually attended the practice of integrity, guided by prudence; together with the scandal and ruin, which have always pursued folly in her senseless rambles, and dogged vice to her horrid haunts. That they may see the rocks, on which some have split, and avoid the destructive track: see the road, which has conducted others to the haven of happiness, and steer the same auspicious course.

They have been initiated in geography, and understand the several divisions of the globe; the extent of its principal kingdoms; and the manners of their various inhabitants. They will tell you the peculiar commodities, which each climate produces; whence comes the tea, that furnishes their breakfast; and whence the sugar, that renders it palatable: what mountains supply them with wines, and what islands send them their spices: in what groves, the silk-worms spin the materials for their cloaths; and what mines * supply them with the diamonds that sparkle in their ear-rings.—A screen covered with a set of coloured maps, and a custom of referring from the public papers to those beautiful draughts, has rendered the acquisition of this knowledge, a diversion rather than a task;—has enticed them into a valuable branch of science, under the inviting disguise of amusement.—This serves to enlarge their apprehensions of things; gives them magnificent thoughts of the great Creator; and may help to suppress that silly self-admiration, which prompts so many pretty idols, to fancy themselves the only considerable creatures under heaven.

i. 11. They *pass away*, (as the prophet still more emphatically speaks), like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, which the wind carries off on its wings, and the place thereof is known no more, Dan. ii. 34.

* The best of the diamond mines are in the kingdom of Golconda, near to Madras (or Fort St George, as it is frequently called, because the East-India company have so named the fort they have built, for the security of their important factory at Madras.)

They

They spell to perfection ; and have obtained this art, by a sort of play, rather than by laborious application. Whenever they asked any little gratification, it has been their papa's custom, to make them spell the word : which if they performed aright, they seldom failed to succeed in their request.—They are mistresses of the needle ; and the youngest, whose genius inclines that way, is expert in using the pencil.—Music is their recreation, not their business. The eldest, to a skilful finger, adds a melodious and well-regulated voice. She often entertains me with singing an anthem to her harpsichord. Entertains, did I say ? She really edifies me. These truly excellent performances, exalt the desires, and compose the affections. They inspire such a serenity of delight, as leaves neither a sting in the conscience, nor a stain on the imagination. Methinks, they bring us a little antepast of heaven, and tune our souls for its harmonious joys.

Thoroughly versed in the most practical parts of arithmetic, they have each her week, wherein to be entrusted with the management of a sum of money. This they disburse, as circumstances require, for the smaller necessities of the family. Of this they keep an exact account, and make a regular entry of each particular in their day-book.—Not long ago, a tenant of inferior rank, came to Camillus with his rent. Instead of receiving it himself, he referred him to Miss Serena. You would have been delighted to observe the behaviour of our little landlady, on this occasion : the engaging condescension, with which she addressed the honest rustic : the tender good-nature, with which she enquired after my dame and the family at home : the ready dexterity, with which she wrote and subscribed a proper receipt : and, above all, her amiable generosity, in returning half a crown, to buy a copy-book for his eldest son ; “ Who,” he said, “ was just going into joining-hand ;” but he feared, would never come to spell or write, half “ so well as her ladyship.”

Though Camillus is careful to ground them betimes in the rules of œconomy, he is equally careful to cultivate a spirit of discreet beneficence.—A few days ago, when my friend and his lady were abroad, Miss Mitissa was informed

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ed of a poor woman in the parish, just brought to bed, after a long and hard labour; who, being unhappily married to a sot of a fellow, was, at a time when the choicest comforts are scarcely sufficient, destitute of the meanest conveniences. Upon hearing the calamitous case, she immediately dispatched a servant, with a crown from her weekly stock. Part, to buy for the afflicted creature some present accommodations; and part, to defray the expences, at such a juncture, unavoidable: but gave a strict charge, that the whole should be employed for the relief of the distressed mother, and her helpless infant; none of it fingered or enjoyed by the worthless drone, her husband. When Camillus returned, he was so pleased with this seasonable and well-judged charity; that, besides his commendation and caresses, he farther rewarded our considerate matron-like benefactress, by making her a present of *Clarissa* *. For he always contrives to make, what tends to their improvement, the matter of their reward. If they have committed a fault, they are forbid the privilege of using their maps. If they have behaved in a becoming manner, their recompence is, not a piece of money, or a paper of sweetmeats, but some new instruction on the globe, some new lesson on the harpsichord, which may at once delight and improve them.

To prevent a haughty carriage, and to worm out all inordinate self-love, he teaches them to consider their neighbours, as members of the same universal family, and children of the same Almighty Father. However poor in their circumstances, or mean in their aspect, they are the objects of God's infinitely tender regards—of that God, who has given his own Son to suffer death for their pardon; and has prepared a heaven of endless bliss, for their final reception. For which reason they should despise none, but honour all: should be as ready to do them good, as the hand is ready to sooth the eye, when it smarts; or ease the head, when it aches.—One afternoon, when he was going to treat

* A book admirably calculated to instruct and entertain: wrote by the celebrated Mr Richardson, in eight volumes duodecimo.

them with an orange, he bid each of them bring a fine toy, lately received for a present. It was made in the shape of a knife; the handle of ivory, and inlaid with the gayest colours: the blade of glass, most dazlingly bright, but without an edge. Cut the orange in two, said their Papa. When they both tried with their pretty knives, and, to their no small mortification, both failed, he furnished them with another, of more ordinary appearance, but tolerably sharp. With this they easily pierced the rind, and came at the delicious juice. "Who now," said Camillus, "would not prefer one such serviceable, though plain utensil, to a hundred of those glittering, but worthless trifles? And you, my dear children, if you have no other recommendations, than a shewy person, and the trappings of dress; you will be as contemptible in your generation, as that insignificant bauble. But if it is the desire of your hearts, and the endeavour of your lives, to be extensively useful; you will gain, and, what is better, you will deserve respect: your names will be precious, and your memories blessed."

With equal watchfulness, he discountenances all those acts of petulant barbarity, which children are so apt to exercise on the reptile creation. He will allow no court of inquisition to be erected within his house; no, not upon the most despicable, or even the noxious animals. The very nuisances, that are endued with life, he thinks, should be dispatched, not with a lingering butchery, but with a merciful expedition.—To rend in pieces a poor fly, and feast their eyes with the mangled limbs, shivering and convulsed in the pangs of death: to impale a wretched insect on the needle or the bodkin; and, what is still more shocking, to take pleasure in hearing its passionate moan, and seeing its agonizing struggles; such practices he absolutely forbids, as insufferable violations of nature's law. Such as tend to extinguish the soft emotions of pity, and inure the mind to a habit of inhumanity.—He often informs his lovely pupils, that every living creature is sensible of pain: that none can be abused in this cruel manner, without suffering very exquisite misery. To turn their torments into pastime, and make sport with their an-

guish, is a rigour, more than tyrannical, worse than brutal; is the very reverse of that benign Providence, whose *tender mercies are over all his works*.

He proposes to give them a taste of *natural philosophy*, and to accommodate them with the best *microscopes*; that the use of *these* instruments, and a spice of *that* knowledge, may inspire them with an early admiration of nature's works, and with the deepest veneration of nature's almighty Author.—Camillus has no design to finish a couple of female philosophers; or to divert their attention from those domestic arts, which are the truest accomplishment of the sex*: yet neither would he have his daughters debarred from that rational and exalted delight, which is to be found in the contemplating curiosities of the great Creator's cabinet. Why may they not, without departing from their *own*, or encroaching on the *masculine* character; why may they not be acquainted with the accurately nice structure of an animal; or with the process and effects of vegetation? Why may they not learn the admirable operations of the air, or the wonderful properties of the water? have some general notion of the immense magnitudes, the prodigious distances, and the still more amazing revolutions, of the heavenly orbs? He apprehends it very practicable, to conduct an entertainment with dignity, and order a family with propriety; even while they retain some tolerable idea of these magnificent laws, which regulate the system of the universe.

The microscope, whenever they are inclined to amuse themselves, will shew them a profusion of splendid ornaments, in some of the most common and contemptible objects. It will shew them gold and embroidery, diamonds and pearl, azure, green and vermilion; where unassisted eyes behold nothing, but provocatives of their abhorrence. This instrument will shew them the brightest varnish, and the most curious carving, even in the minutest scraps of existence. Far more surprizing than the magic feats of the

* ——— For nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good.

MILT.

most dexterous juggler, it will treat their sight, not with delusive, but with real wonders. A huge elephant * shall stalk, where a puny mite was wont to crawl. Blood shall bound from the beating heart, and eyes sparkle with a lively lustre; limbs shall play the most sprightly motions, or stand composed in the most graceful attitudes; where nothing ordinarily appeared, but a confused speck of animated matter.—A tincture of philosophy will be the *cosmetic* of nature: will render all her scenes lovely, and all her apartments a theatre of diversion: diversions, infinitely superior to those dangerous delights, which are so apt to inveigle the affections, and debauch the minds, of young people.—When philosophy lends her optics, an unclouded morning, beautiful with the rising sun; a clear night, brilliant with innumerable stars; will be a more pleasing spectacle, than the gaudiest illuminations of the assembly-room. The melody of birds, and the murmur of fountains; the humming insect, and the sighing gale; will be a higher gratification, than the finest airs of an opera. A field covered with corn, or a meadow besprinkled with daisies; a marsh planted with osiers, or a mountain shaded with oaks; will yield a far more agreeable prospect, than the most pompous scenes that decorate the stage. Should clouds over-cast the heavens, or winter disrobe the flowers; an inquiry into the causes of these grand vicissitudes, will more than compensate the transitory loss. A discovery of the divine wisdom and divine goodness, in these seemingly disastrous changes, will impart gaiety to the most gloomy sky, and make the most unornamented seasons smile.

It is for want of such truly elegant and satisfactory amusements, that so many ladies of the first distinction, and finest genius, have no proper employ for their delicate capacities; but lose their happiness, in flights of caprice, or fits of the vapours: lose their time in the most dissipated chat, or the most whimsical vagaries: while thought is a burthen,

* What is allusively said of the detracting tongue, may, I think, without a figure, be affirmed of this wonderful instrument. *Trabem in festuca, elephantem in culice, Alpes & pyrenaeos saltus in verruca ostendit.*

and reflection is a drudgery, solitude fills them with horror, and a serious discourse makes them melancholy.

Above all, Camillus is most earnestly desirous to have his tender charge, grounded in the principles, and actuated with the spirit, of Christianity. No scheme, he is thoroughly persuaded, was ever so wisely calculated, to sweeten their tempers, to exalt their affections, and form them to felicity, either in this world or another. It is therefore his daily endeavour, by the most easy and endearing methods of instruction, to fill their minds with the knowledge of those heavenly doctrines; and win their hearts to the love of that invaluable book, in which they are delineated.—He longs to have a sense of God Almighty's goodness impressed on their souls. From this source, under the influences of the sanctifying Spirit, he would derive all the graces, and all the duties of godliness*. With this view, he speaks of the divine Majesty, not only as supereminently great, but as most transcendently possessed of every delightful, every charming excellence. He represents all the comforts they enjoy, and every blessing they receive, as the gifts of his bountiful hand, and as an earnest of unspeakably richer favours. He often, often reminds them, that whatever their heavenly Father *commands, forbids, inflicts*, proceeds from his overflowing kindness, and is intended for their eternal good, if, by these expedients, he may awaken in their minds, an habitual gratitude to their everlasting Benefactor. The actings of which noble principle, are not only fruitful in every good work, but productive of the truest satisfaction. Somewhat like the fragrant *incense* of consecrated incense; which, while they

* This method is perfectly conformable to the practice of the psalmist; *Thy loving-kindness is ever before mine eyes, and, animated by this sweet inducement, I will walk in thy truth*, Psal xxvii. 3.—To the injunction of our divine Master; *If ye love me; let this be the proof, this the fruit of your affection, keep my commandments*, John xiv. 15.—And to the experience of the chief of the apostles; *The love of Christ, though not exclusive of, yet superior to every other motive, constraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 14.

honoured the great object of worship, regaled with their pleasing perfumes of devout worship.

Nothing is more displeasing to Camillus, than the fond flatteries, which their injudicious admirers bestow, on their shape and complexion, the gracefulness of their carriage, and the vivacity of their wit. He would fain make them sensible, that these embellishments are of the lowest value, and most fading nature *;—that if they render their possessors vain and self-conceited, they are far greater blemishes, than a hump on the back, a wen in the neck, or stuttering in the speech.—He would have them thoroughly convinced, that, notwithstanding all their silks, diamonds, and other marks of their superior circumstances, they are ignorant, guilty, impotent creatures. Blind to truths of the last importance; deserving the vengeance of eternal fire, and unable of themselves, to think a good thought. That from such convictions, they may perceive their absolute need of a Saviour: a Saviour in all his offices—as a Prophet, to teach them heavenly wisdom—as a Priest, to atone for all their many, many sins—as a King, to subdue their iniquities, write his laws in their hearts, and make them, in all their conversation, holy.

In short; the point he chiefly labours, is, to work in their hearts a deep, an abiding sense, that God is their supreme, their only good; that the blessed Jesus is the rock of their hopes, and the fountain of their salvation: that all their dependence, for acquiring the beauties of holiness, and tasting the joys of the sublimest virtue, is to be placed on the Holy Ghost the Comforter.—Amidst all these efforts

* Here is the amiable and noble reverse of that modish picture represented by Milton:

For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
Yet empty of all good, wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise;
Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye.

B. XI. 614.
of

of his own, he never forgets, never fails to plead, that precious promise of unchangeable JEHOVAH; *I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring; and they shall grow up, in knowledge and in grace, as willows by the water-courses* *.

A lady of brilliant parts, but no very extraordinary piety, told Camillus: That he would spoil the pretty dears: would extinguish that decent pride, and fondness for pleasure, which are shining qualifications in an accomplished young lady; which give her an elevation of sentiment, and a delicacy of taste, greatly superior to the ignoble vulgar.—To whom he replied; “Far from extirpating their passions, “I only attempt to turn them into a right channel, and “direct them to the worthiest objects. Willing I am, that “they should have a decent ambition; an ambition, not to “catch the giddy coxcomb’s eye, or be the hackneyed “toast of rakes: but to please their parents; to make a “husband happy; and to promote the glory of God.— “They may entertain a fondness for pleasure; but such “pleasure, as will ennoble their souls; afford them substantial satisfaction; and prepare them for the fruition of “immortal bliss.—Let them be covetous also, if you please, “Madam; but covetous of redeeming their time, and of “gaining intellectual improvement: covetous of those “riches, which no moth can corrupt, nor thief steal; “which neither time, nor death destroy.”

In all these instances of parental solicitude, his beloved Emilia takes her constant, her willing share. - Contributes her advice, in every plan that is concerted; and her hearty concurrence in every expedient that is executed: every ex-

* Is. xlv. 3. 4. A promise of inestimable worth: never to be forgotten by believing parents; better, to their children, than the largest patrimony, or the richest dowry.—It is exceedingly beautiful, and equally comfortable. Not, I will drop, I will distill, but I will pour; denoting a large and copious supply. They shall grow, not as a root out of a dry ground; but as a tree, planted in a most kindly soil, where it is plentifully watered, and flourishes in the most ample manner.

pedient, for polishing the human jewel *, and making their manners, as faultless as their forms.—May the God of infinite goodness, the sacred source of all perfection, prosper their endeavours! That, as the young ladies are adorned, in their persons, with native beauty; they may be enriched, in their understandings, with refined knowledge; and dignified, in their souls, with the Spirit of the blessed Jesus.—Then, surely, more amiable objects, the eye of man cannot behold: more desirable partners, the heart of man cannot wish.

- * Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
And pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind.

THOMSON'S Spring.

F I N I S.



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